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In this issue

IN MEMORIAM



FR. ALEXANDER NADSON

August 8, 1926 - April 15, 2015

The Belarusian Review editorial board would like to extend our deepest sympathy to all who knew Fr. Alexander Nadson who has died on April 15, 2015 at the age of 88. We would like to commemorate Fr. Alexander by quoting a passage from his interview for our journal (vol. 26, no. 3, 2014):

The task of the church is to bring the God's Word and the message of the salvation to the world in the most accessible form for each individual. And this most accessible form is to address people in the language of the nation they belong to. It is not my goal as a priest to go and recast a Belarusian into someone else. We take the world as it is and we bring this great message of the salvation for all mankind. There is no need to become someone else to be a son of God, because God has a place for everyone. Thus, I do not understand why one needs to bring the message of the salvation of the mankind to the Belarusians in a different language and in a different form than the ordinary Belarusian one. Remember that after the Ascension of Jesus into heaven the apostles were given the gift of mastering different languages, so that they could bring the message of the salvation for all mankind in all the languages of all peoples of the world. Belarusians should go to God their own way and in their own language. Why is it necessarily to somehow adjust or limit this? Any church hierarchy should refer to faithful in the language of the people to whom they bring the God's Word.

EDITORIAL

BELARUSIAN STUDIES IN THE WEST

DAVID MARPLES

In the late 1990s, it seemed, the Western world finally took note of the Republic of Belarus. Two major conferences were held at the Davis Center, Harvard University in 1999 and the European Research Institute at the University of Bath in 2000, which brought together a wide array of scholars, from Belarus, EU countries, and North America. Both ultimately resulted in publications.

Why the sudden interest? It seemed to be a combination of factors, including the emergence of an authoritarian regime in Minsk with the disappearance of several prominent figures who had formerly been close to Lukashenka; questions about the future of Belarus and whether it was possible to establish a democratic regime there, together with the efforts at a dialogue between the regime and the opposition, mediated by the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Minsk headed by the German diplomat Hans Georg Wieck, formerly German ambassador to the USSR.

The two conferences, unfortunately, did not herald a period of sustained interest. Still, in 2007 the Center for Belarusian Studies was established in Winfield, Kansas on the initiative of the first US Ambassador to Belarus following its independence, David H. Swartz. Headed by ethno-musician Professor M. Paula Survilla as Executive Director, the Center hosts visiting scholars and students and runs a summer language program in Hajnowka, Poland for students wishing to learn Belarusian. The last such program was led by Curt Woolhiser, currently Lecturer in Russian at Brandeis University.

Curt has at times single-handedly kept afloat Belarusian studies in North America. A talented scholar, who studies the linguistic changes in the borderlands between Belarus and Poland, he was one of the founding members of the North American Association for Belarusian Studies (NAABS). The core group consists of NAABS consists of less than ten people, including Paula Survilla, Zina Gimpelevich, a professor emeritus of German and Slavic Languages at the University of Waterloo, Thomas Bird of the City University of New York, and the well known Belarusian sociologist Elena Gapova, now based at Western Michigan University.

Moving to the present, Belarus is once again a more popular topic in the media and at international conferences focusing on Slavic studies, mostly as a result of its proximity to Ukraine and role in peace negotiations. As it is impossible to cover all aspects, I will narrow my focus to books published in the English language that pertain to the history and politics of Belarus, i.e. monographs that comment and analyze the current state. The publications cited are scholarly and peer--reviewed. They fall into the categories mainly of history and

politics, with some overlap between those disciplines.

Three older books on Belarus merit mention. Nicholas P. Vakar's Belorussia: the Making of a Nation (Harvard University Press, 1956) was eloquent and detailed, but did not venture far beyond the traditional perspective of Belarus as an appendage of the Russian Empire. In 1972 Ivan S. Lubachko published Belorussia under Soviet Rule, 1917-1957 (University Press of Kentucky), and fifteen years later, Jan Zaprudnik published Belarus: At A Crossroads in History (Westview Press, Colorado), which was the first Engish-language publication to appear after Belarus' independence. Zaprudnik had moved to the United States in 1957 after a spell at Radio Liberty, and received his PhD from New York University in 1969. Though sometimes perceived as a "nationalist scholar" he is a careful and balanced public speaker who is always open to debate.

My own two books that appeared in the 1990s were very different and received different receptions. The first Belarus From Soviet Rule to Nuclear Catastrophe (Macmillan Press, 1996) was essentially about Chernobyl, though it contains a historical outline of modern Belarus as well. The second was actually written for a series, significantly abridged at the editor's demand, and appeared under the provocative title Belarus: A Denationalized Nation (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), with the question mark I had appended at the end removed. I have lived with this title and been identified with it ever since, and as a result the book perhaps had a greater impact than anticipated.

In 2005, Zina Gimpelevich published an important literary biography of writer Vasyl Bykau, who had spent most of his later years exiled from his homeland, mostly in Germany and the Czech republic, but returned to his homeland just before his death in 2003. There followed a spate of books about Belarus in the English-speaking world (at least seven over the next eleven years), most of which have focused on politics, history, and state policies, mostly related to activities and assessments of Belarus' only president to date, Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

Concerning state identity and outlook, in 2008, Grigory Ioffe of Radford University in Virginia published a critique of the US government's adversarial policy toward Lukashenka's regime in Understanding Belarus and How Western Foreign Policy Misses the Mark (Rowman and Littlefield, 2008). On a similar topic though with a somewhat more concentrated theme was Nelly Bekus' Struggle Over Identity: The Official and the Alternative "Belarusianness" (Budapest: CEU Press, 2010). Both these books offered new approaches to Belarus that incorporated the current makeup and outlook of the population.

In 2011, shortly after the contentious and violent presidential elections of December 2010, two books appeared with almost identical titles. One was by University of London scholar and EU analyst Andrew Wilson, entitled Belarus: The Last European Dictatorship (Yale University Press) and the other by the former British Ambassador to Belarus, Brian Bennett, Belarus: The Last Dictatorship in Europe (Oxford University Press). Both works provided some incisive investigations into internal politics. Bennett's in particular could offer some personal insights into diplomatic life in Belarus from the perspective of an embassy. Neither foresaw much prospect of immediate change.

In 2014, three more books appeared: my own examination of the use of history, memory, and the Second World War by the Lukashenka administration—'Our Glorious Past: Lukashenka's Belarus and the Great Patriotic War (ibidem Verlag), a study of five years' duration; Grigory Ioffe's Reassessing Lukashenka: Belarus in Cultural and Geopolitical Context (Palgrave Macmillan), which made use of the author's extraordinary access to the Belarusian leader and included his interviews as an appendix; and Per Anders Rudling's The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism, 1906-1931 (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press). As Per was my PhD student, I can only comment favorably on the appearance of the latter volume, which started life as his PhD thesis, though it has been considerably revised.

Lastly one should mention another 2014 publication that has a wider scope than one republic, namely Stephen White and Valentina Feklyunina's Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). White, Ioffe, and I constitute an annual panel at the annual convention of the American Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), though the panelists vary and have often included others. Ioffe and I also are often asked to comment on contemporary Belarus for the US government usually, and thus one would imagine quite usefully, from quite different perspectives.

Still, one would have to acknowledge that the study of Belarus remains relatively neglected. There has been inordinate focus on government and non-government think-tanks on whether the republic might evolve into a democracy, whether it can improve human rights, hold free elections, expand the freedom of the media, and the like. But there is far less discussion of the country's historical past (especially pre-20th century) and cultural developments. Moreover, to my knowledge there is no English-speaking department in humanities or the social sciences in North America or other English-speaking countries that offers focus exclusively on Belarus. In fact the notion of an academic hiring in Belarusian studies is so far-fetched as enter the realms of fantasy.

That is not a state of affairs likely to be remedied in the current bleak climate for Slavic studies in this part of the world. On the other hand, significant progress has been made and I believe there is a solid foundation to build further. And although I have focused on the English-speaking world, I have attended academic conferences and symposia on Belarus in Germany, France, Norway, Poland, and (unsurprisingly) Lithuania that have been held in a variety of languages. Twenty years ago, the number of scholars in Ukrainian studies could be listed on the fingers of one's hands. Today and not always for the best of reasons, that field could even be regarded as overcrowded. My hope is that the same thing could happen to Belarus, i.e. that interest in the republic continues to grow among the scholarly communities of the West.

FEATURES

ALEŚ KRAŬCEVIČ: WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS WITH RUSSIA THROUGH THE BORDER FENCE



Belarusian historian Dr. Aleś Kraŭcevič has recently released his new book "A Borderland Country" (in Belarusian: Kraina pahraničča*) in which he explores Belarus within the context of a cultural and political borderland. The view of Belarus as a borderland has considerably influenced studies of the Belarusian phenomenon. The Belarusian Review asked the author to present his perceptions of Belarus as a borderland.*

Belarusian Review: *There are different concepts of borderland as a historical, cultural, religious and geopolitical phenomenon. What concept of borderland do you use in your new book to evaluate Belarusian realities?*

Aleś Kraŭcevič: Let me answer with a quote from the first chapter of the book: "Belarus is bound by a four-part natural, ethnic, cultural and political border. Being a borderland is a permanent condition and defines a nation's destiny. It has determined the happiness and the tragedy of this land for over a thousand years, from ancient times up to the recent past. Today's uncertain status of Belarusian statehood is the result and the manifestation of this borderland condition".

BR: *In his book,* Belarus – a Perpetual Borderland (Brill Academic Publishers, 2009) *Andrew Savchenko argues that Belarus' location between Poland and Russia can be seen as "a major determinant of Belarus' identity". To what extent is this statement correct in its historical and contemporary perspectives?*

AK: The answer to this question can be long and complex. Our history clearly demonstrates that both Russia and Poland have heavily consumed the cultural resources of Belarus. It would be sufficient to mention the names of Ivan Fedorov (in documents known as Fiedarovič) and Simeon of Polack, Tadeusz Kościuszko and Adam Mickiewicz. The impact of the Belarusian language and culture on Russian and Polish culture and language has hardly been studied.

Both these neighbors have induced strong assimilationist impulses, especially in the 20th century. The resistance against these assimilationist aspirations became a determinant of the Belarusian identity.

BR: *In addition, the current location of Belarus between the EU and Russia is usually seen as a necessity for Belarus to make a geopolitical choice between these two regional centers of power. In your opinion, does the concept of borderland require a compulsory "either / or" choice?*

AK: I believe that in today's situation this choice is mandatory and it should be in favor of Europe in order to distance ourselves as far as possible from Russia, as it poses a real danger to the very existence of the Belarusian statehood and the Belarusian nation. We should be friends with Russia through the border fence, just as Finland is.

BR: *Does the status of Belarus as a borderland country affect the current situation of the Belarusian language as a means of communication in Belarusian society?*

AK: This effect is obvious and very negative. It can be illustrated by the example of Belarusian schools. In the absence of an independent state in the interwar period, Belarusian-language schools were liquidated on both sides of the Poland/Soviet border. They are nearly nonexistent under Lukashenka. Millions of Belarusians who currently pass through Russian-language schools form today's "Russian-speaking population".

interview conducted by Kiryl Kascian

BECOME AN AUTHOR

We are looking forward to receive contributions from new authors, particularly from young scholars and analysts dealing with issues related to Belarus. If you would like to submit your text to the Belarusian Review please, email it to the address: thepointjournal@gmail.com or belarusianreview@hotmail.com. All the materials must be sent in a text format (.doc, .docx, .rtf). bear author's name and should not exceed 7,000 words. Please note that the Belarusian Review is an entirely non-commercial project operating on a voluntary basis.

SERGEY DOLGOPOLOV: BELARUS AND THE EU CLOSE ON IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE



Latvia holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2015. One of the priorities of the Latvian Presidency is to support the EU's active role on the global stage, including the Eastern Partnership region. Within this framework, a key role is attributed to the 4th Eastern Partnership Summit which will take place in Riga on May 21-22, 2015. The Belarusian Review asked Latvian MP Sergey Dolgopolov from the parliamentary group "Concord" (Latvian: Saskaņa*) about the Latvian EU Presidency and the role of the Eastern Partnership region in the foreign policy of Latvia.*

Belarusian Review: *What has Latvia learnt from more than ten years of membership in the EU?*

Sergey Dolgopolov: Latvia has learned to live by the EU rules – implement European directives, use European funding for the development of its infrastructure, agriculture, education and research. What Latvia has not learnt yet is to effectively defend its interests in the European Union and wisely apply additional opportunities to improve the socio-economic situation in the country.

BR: *What does the Presidency of the Council of the European Union generally mean for Latvia?*

SD: For Latvia this is primarily a matter of image, an opportunity to show itself as a full partner in a very diverse European community. Additionally, it is a good experience to promote it's own initiatives and expand the horizons of political thinking.

BR: *What is the role of the Eastern Partnership region in Latvia's foreign policy?*

SD: This role is very important. First of all, because of the interest in economic cooperation with our neighbors. Unfortunately, however, many European politicians, including some of our "strategists", see the Eastern Partnership project as a tool to isolate and weaken Russia's influence in the post-Soviet space and consider it key to their security. I do not think that such a security design has a chance of success.

BR: *Belarus is one of the neighboring countries of Latvia. How could you describe the relationship between the two countries after Latvia's accession to the EU?*

SD: I believe that Latvia's accession to the EU did not result in significant changes in relations with the Republic of Belarus. Traditional areas of cooperation, trade, transit, investment and the creation of joint ventures in both countries, continued to develop, as the statistics clearly indicate. I do not mention cooperation in the social sphere, which among other things because of the Latvia's Belarusian community is quite stable and has good perspectives. However, one should note that Latvia's accession to the EU sanctions against Belarus has caused some tension in mutual relations which certainly affects the indicators of economic activity.

BR: *In February 2015, Aliaksandr Lukashenka said that Belarus would appreciate it if Latvia could help Belarus establish closer relations with the EU. How realistic do you see this convergence, and what could be Latvia's role and interest in this process?*

SD: Closer relations between the EU and Belarus are quite real. Moreover, it is successfully developing today in the economic sphere. Approximately one thousand companies with Belarusian capital operate in Latvia and this is the actual process of Belarus' entering to the European market. I think that the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga in May 2015 will more specifically define the minimal scope of actions required from the Republic of Belarus and the EU to continue this process. As previously, Latvia will certainly contribute to such rapprochement.

Editor's note: Sergey Dolgopolov – Latvian MP, member of the parliamentary group of the Social Democratic Party "Concord" (Latvian: *Saskaņa,* Russian: *Согласие*), chairman of the parliamentary Public Administration and Local Government Committee and municipal affairs, member of the European Affairs Committee, former vice-mayor of Riga (2001-2005).

QUOTES

We [Belarus and Latvia]have lots of ideas regarding cooperation in culture, education, economy, environmental protection, agriculture, and other fields. At present our relations are dynamically developing.

Edgars Rinkēvičs (Foreign Minister of Latvia)

Source: BelTA, 20.02.2015

IVONKA SURVILLA: MYTHOLOGIZED HISTORY IS THE BASIS FOR PUTIN'S NEO-SOVIET RHETORIC



Not denying the sovereignty of the state, the leadership of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church see Belarus and Ukraine as two inalienable parts of the so-called "Russian world". Additionally, both Belarus and Ukraine are often viewed through their geographic location between the European Union and Russia, and perceived as objects of geopolitical competition among these two centers of gravity. Belarusian Review has interviewed Ivonka Survilla, the President of the BNR Rada, about the rhetoric of the "Russian world" doctrine , Belarus' geopolitical choices and lessons which Belarus could learn from the Ukrainian crisis.

Ivonka Survilla: "I believe, on the contrary, that the Russian leadership has proven over and over again that it DOES deny the sovereignty of Ukraine and Belarus. The real cause of the conflict in Ukraine has been this denial.

Regarding Belarus, Putin has expressed quite unambiguously his views in 2002. Since the occupation of Belarus at the end of the 18th century by Catherine II, Russia has used every means to transform our land into a Russian province. The Russian Orthodox Church has been one of those means. Since 1839, when the Belarusian Uniate population was forcefully converted, the Russian-speaking Russian Orthodox Church was an invaluable tool for the promotion of Russian interests in Belarus. It continues to be such a tool in independent Belarus. The recently Moscow-appointed head of the Belarusian Orthodox Church is a Russian-speaking Russian national. As a result, pro-Russian brainwashing of Belarusian Orthodox believers continues after 20 years of sovereignty. In the meantime, the Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church is prohibited in Belarus. Orthodox Belarusians are being denationalized in the very churches in which they worship.

Putin's neo-Soviet rhetoric about Ukraine and Belarus helps to construct and to perpetuate attitudes based on connections between Russian identity and its development throughout a history of colonialism and imperialism. As part of public discourse, such rhetoric is damaging for those it subjugates by affecting national morale and causing internal and regional conflict. It can, at its worst, disenfranchise populations from democratic processes.

As for Belarus and Ukraine being "inalienable parts of the so-called Russian World", Russia has rewritten the history of Eastern Europe to prove that Slavic nations had common origin and were "separated" by later events. Unfortunately, the belief in this common origin paradigm has sometimes been expressed by those whose international reputation as dissidents has given them authority to construct inaccurate views of eastern European cultures and nations, not only within Eastern Europe but on a global level as well. Solzhenitsyn's voice as a writer has contributed to the damage through such statements as "our people [have been] divided into three branches, but only because of a terrible misfortune in connection with Mongol aggression and Polish colonization". This mythologized theory of origin has become a strategic statement for contemporary rhetoric that espouses the "rightful" union of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The notion that speaking Russian is an indicator of Russian nationhood (despite the fact that the language has been that of the aggressor and colonizer) is another manifestation of how colonialism continues to define rhetoric and political strategy."

BR: *Various experts often refer to the popular "either-or" opinion polls on geopolitical choice of the Belarusian population. Could these opinion polls provide reliable results considering their format and current political conditions in the country?*

IS: An opinion poll collected from a population deprived of freedom of speech will, most of the time, not be considered by "experts" as a credible source of information. It is at best statistical theater, or another shrewd tool intended to prove predetermined political interest for the sponsors of the opinion poll or the regime they serve. When the question in such conditions is an "either-or" question, and the choice given is artificially limited, a knowledgeable researcher might simply ignore the poll altogether. However, not all researchers are knowledgeable enough to distinguish farce from reality. Especially at a time when lies have become an integral part of political dialectics and are extensively used to sway opinion. Others, who cannot be accused of gullibility, may deliberately use selected data in order to prove their

point.

Both groups may give a totally wrong impression of the thinking of the people of Belarus, which in turn may result in misplaced and grave actions in the spheres of negotiation and policy-decision.

BR: *Today's situation in Ukraine is very dramatic and challenging. What Belarus could and should learn from the Ukrainian events?*

IS: Events in Ukraine have already given Aliaksandr Lukashenka some food for thought. While he himself has been speaking Russian since he was sworn in, he has recently asked Belarusians to speak their own language lest they cease being a nation. The next logical step should be to switch from Russian to Belarusian the working language in schools. In the meantime, survival remains the main concern of the people of Belarus.

Day and night they are exposed to anti-Ukrainian propaganda by the Russian propaganda machine and know little about Ukrainian reality. In order for Belarusians to learn from the Ukrainian events, they should be exposed to real news from credible sources. And that would happen only if broadcasters from Western Europe and North America, such as BBC, Voice of America, DW or CBC included in their international programming broadcasts in Belarusian directed to the people of Belarus. It would be cheaper than possible future consequences of inaction. With the exception of RFE/RL and Belarusian broadcasts from Poland, the only newscasts available to the people of Belarus are the regime's and Russian propaganda.

Such conduits for information are not passive. They also directly affect Western policy decisions. In many ways we are dependent on a global media machine that, in its apathy about Belarus and about Ukraine, especially at the grassroots level, can stall the processes towards positive change.

How does one learn, without the benefit of hindsight, from conflict and war? Certainly the actions of the aggressor send a clear warning that the region is not safe from invasion. The hope is that democratic governments will uphold the sovereignty of each nation. One of the key points made at the policy level is that Ukrainians themselves have demonstrated their desire for change and for democratic development. This is not, to outside observers, as obvious in Belarus. If similar steps were taken by Putin in Belarus, it is not clear that western governments would be as eager to help. My point is that the perceptions of Belarus will be compared to action in Ukraine, unless Belarusians make enough noise to be noticed.

I very much hope that the newly democratically elected Parliament of Ukraine will succeed in its endeavors to make Ukraine a truly democratic and efficient State. A successful Ukraine will in turn encourage Belarusians to aspire for a future which does not have to be worse than the present under Lukashenka.

interview conducted by Kiryl Kascian

THOUGHTS & OBSERVATIONS

ALEXANDER OSIPOV: BELARUS, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE STILL BENEFIT FROM THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF DIVERSITY GOVERNANCE



The ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme is a three-year project launched in 2014 and focused on Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. The Programme has ambitious goals to bring together public bodies, academia, as well as minority and other civic society organizations to establish networking and exchange of good practices. Belarusian Review has asked Dr. Alexander Osipov, academic leader of the project and Senior Research Associate at the European Centre for Minority Issues, to introduce the project.

Belarusian Review: *The ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme is supported by the Foreign Ministry of Denmark. What triggered the interest of the Danish state to support this project?*

Alexander Osipov: The Danish Neighbourhood Programme 2013-17 officially seeks 'to contribute to a peaceful and stable Europe' and lists Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine among its 'target countries'. The reasons are quite obvious because of these countries' proximity to the EU. Human rights, good governance, conflict resolution and minority rights are among the Programme's thematic priorities, and it is not a big surprise that the Danish Foreign Ministry and the ECMI successfully negotiated the funding of the ECMI's project on ethnic minorities east of the EU.

BR: *This Programme is targeted on three EaP states – Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Why are only these three EaP counties grouped together?*

AO: It is a combination of several different circumstances and considerations. The European donors' interests seem to be shifting from the South Caucasus to the western part of EaP, so to say; the South Caucasus is the domain of ECMI-Georgia, but not of the ECMI Headquarters; ECMI has been working with Belarus since 2011; and the Director of ECMI started planning the re-entry of ECMI to Moldova long before the drafting of the EPP. Last but not least is that the core EPP staff, namely Hanna Vasilevich and I, are particularly interested in this region from an academic perspective. Our research project on Soviet legacies, which resulted in a monograph entitled "Policies of Ethno-cultural Diversity Management in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine: between Soviet Legacies and European Standards", covering these three countries. This grouping is not random, because the three countries have much in common.

BR: *From the description of the ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme one can learn that the target countries face various challenges and also have numerous achievements in the accommodation and governance of their ethnic and linguistic diversity. How exactly could you describe these challenges and achievements?*

AO: All three are heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, language and to a lesser extent religion; in combination with weak economies, imperfect political institutions, internal ideological cleavages and external pressures this may lead to social and political lock-ins because of ethnic segregation and nationalist populism at the best or overall destabilization at the worst. 'Achievements' is a politically correct term here, meaning that these countries avoided the worst scenarios and instead created (or rather inherited and maintained) a system of ethno-cultural management that has proved to be viable in the long run.

In a nutshell, there is in some way an acknowledged societal bilingualism which turns out to be acceptable for the populaces; there are no deep ethnic or linguistic cleavages or, worse, segregated and mutually hostile communities; there is room for activities of minority organizations and minority--related cultural and educational institutions; and some ways of least symbolic co-optation of minority spokespersons into the system of governance. Along with this, Moldova demonstrates a rare case of viable territorial autonomy (Gagauzia) and also a relatively civilized way of treating its breakaway region (Transnistria) with its inhabitants.

BR: *What are the main similarities and differences between the systems of minority protection in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine and how could these differences be explained?*

AO: Obviously, all the three countries differ in terms of size, demographic composition, political regime, external relations, history, national narratives and so forth. One can point out that Ukraine is at state of war while the others are not; Ukraine and Moldova are pluralist democracies while Belarus is not; Moldova contains an ethnicity-based territorial autonomy while Ukraine in fact does not any longer. Although all these circumstances somehow affect official ethnic policies, a comparison based on these grounds would be barely productive. In my view, one should rather look at the formal and informal 'rules of the game' in ethno-politics (or, in other words, institutions) and the ways they are represented and justified. In this regard, I find that there are many more similarities than differences.

In brief, all the three countries still employ the Soviet system of diversity governance as it was formed in late 1980s – a combination of mild majority ethnic nationalism with de facto maintenance of linguistic and ethnic pluralism. In this case the Soviet heritage as such is not bad in my view; accidentally and surprisingly, this model, once crafted ad hoc, opened up a window of opportunities. To date all the three countries benefit from weak, flexible and rather symbolic institutionalizations of ethnic, regional and linguistic diversity; a clearly defined and straightforward nation-building strategy and ethnic policies would be a road to a stalemate, i.e. to deeply divided societies and protracted conflicts.

Editor's note: The European Centre for Minority Issues was founded in 1996 by the governments of Denmark, Germany and Schleswig-Holstein. The Center conducts practice and policy-oriented research as well as providing information, expertise, consultations and documentation concerning minority-majority relations in Europe. ECMI advises European governments, regional intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations. More information about the ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme "National Minorities and Ethno-Political Issues. Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine" is available at: http://ecmi-epp.org.

DEFINITION OF A NATIONAL MINORITY À LA BELARUS: DYNAMISM OR DROOP?

KIRYL KASCIAN

INTRODUCTION

Analysis of Belarus' legislation on national minorities raises the question of the very definition of national minority within the context of the Belarus domestic legislation. Belarus' minority-related legislation reflected only quite weakly if at all any impact of the European norms. At the same time it maintained its own normative and institutional framework for the implementation of policies related to minority issues. As a result the scope of the notion national minority within the context of Belarusian legislation largely complies with the European standards. This text offers an analysis of the Belarusian legislation on national minorities from the perspective of its current "dynamic" interpretation.

MINORITIES AND A MAJORITY IN THE BELARUSIAN CONTEXT

A minority in general may be seen as "a non-dominant, institutionalised (i.e. possessing a certain inner structure and continuity) group sharing a distinct cultural identity that it wishes to preserve" and its existence is, as the Permanent Court of International Justice stated as early as 1930 underlined,a matter of fact, not a question of law (i.e. the law deals with the fact, but does not create it). The reference to the nationality of the state can be observed in another definition of minority as „a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, well defined and historically established on the territory of that state, whose members – being nationals of the state – possess ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion, or language".

Thus, the minority groups' existence is determined in each case by a sum of individual choices made by nationals of the state. The Belarusian Constitution provides that the state should

- regulate relations among social, ethnic and other communities on the basis of the principles of equality before the law and respect of their rights and interests (Art.14), and
- bear responsibility for preserving the historic, cultural and spiritual heritage, and for free development of the cultures of all ethnic communities residing in the Republic of Belarus (Art. 15).

Therefore, it implies the equality before the law of the ethnic Belarusian majority and ethnic minorities on the one hand, and the equal treatment of all ethnic minorities on the other hand. It is necessary to point out that the Constitution (and practice of the state) rather applies the term community (Belarusian: *supoĺnasć*) instead of minority (Belarusian: *mienšasć*) which may indirectly imply a higher degree of inclusion of all ethnic group representatives into the state and public life. Belarusian authorities declare that "Belarusian laws permit no racial, ethnic or religious discrimination whatsoever" and emphasize that state policies are aimed at all-encompassing inclusion so that "every man [in Belarus] could feel socially secure, confident of the future". This is explained by the unique centuries-long historical experience of the people in Belarus that taught them "to understand each other and be tolerant towards each other," making contemporary Belarus "a common peaceful and cozy home for people belonging to 140 ethnicities and 25 denominations". In fact, experts generally emphasize the conflict-free interethnic and inter-denominational situation in Belarus. This implies that in Belarus majority-minority relations is a matter that has shifted from politics, economy or social issues to cultural identity where belonging to an ethnic group provides an "anchor for [people's] self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging."

BELARUS' LEGISLATION ON NATIONAL MINORITIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The main document that regulates the status of national minorities in Belarus is a special 1992 Law on National Minorities, as amended. This law is based on the Constitution and the principles of international law in the fields of both human rights and national minorities. This includes guaranteeing the realization of both individual and collective rights and interests of ethnic minorities. In the context of the application of international law principles, it is relevant to highlight the fact that Belarus is the only European country which is not a member of the Council of Europe. Thus, Belarus is not a party to the two main European legally binding instruments that deal with the rights of national minorities, i.e. the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. That is why from the formal point of view Belarusian legislation is not required to comply with the minority protection standards ensured by the Council of Europe, nor take into account the provisions of the two treaties. Therefore, in practice, the interpretation of the term "principles of international law" cannot necessarily be regarded as complying with the framework of pan-European hard-law standards in the sphere of national minorities, since it is not based on them. This, however, does not mean that the Belarusian domestic legislation on minority rights ensures lower standards for the protection of national minorities, than those that exist in the countries of the Council of Europe. Also, this situation does not mean that Belarusian law is separated from the European context. Rather, we can talk about their parallel development and the situation where the direct influence of standards provided by the pan-European legally binding instruments in the Belarusian legislation is weak, if at all present, and the fact that the policy on national minorities in Belarus exists wi-

thin its own regulatory and institutional framework. Also, we should consider the fact that the issue, which ethnic groups fall within the scope provided by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities after ratification by a State, is the internal matter of each state.

That is why the further analysis of the Belarusian legislation on national minorities seems sufficient without additional references to the legal framework of the Council of Europe.

According to Article 1 of the Law "On National Minorities" Belarusian legislators understand by minorities persons who "permanently reside in the territory of the Republic of Belarus and possess the citizenship of the Republic of Belarus, who in their origin, language, culture and traditions are different from the main population of the country." Thus, the Belarusian legislation defines a notion of "national minority" on the basis of:

1. citizenship and
2. numerical minority, which is based on the language, culture and traditions and is determined by individual choice of each individual (Art.2).

At the same time, Belarusian legislator does not specify any additional criteria for determining what a national minority is. Thus, we can say that the Belarusian legislation provides a broad interpretation of the concept of a national minority, which is based only on two main criteria – citizenship and number. This creates a potential dilemma –

• on the one hand, this notion provides quite a "democratic" interpretation of which groups may be treated as minorities,

• on the other hand, the absence of additional criteria *de facto* creates a situation when the "traditional" minorities (including Poles, Russians, Jews, Tatars), who may often be called "autochtonous", are equated with the "new" groups,

• at the same time, almost all groups deemed "traditional" minorities in Belarus (Jews, Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians) are of mixed origin as they comprise both people resident in the country for generations and newcomers.

The result is that the Belarusian legislation abandoned the "static" (i.e. restrictive) interpretation of the national minority notion in favor of a "dynamic" one, which largely depends on the demographic processes in the country with a potentially unlimited number of ethnic groups that can be considered minorities.

PROBLEMATICS: ARE LIMITING CRITERIA NECESSARY?

Hence, the "dynamic" interpretation of the term "national minority," which in the case of Belarus is based only on two criteria – citizenship and the number comparing to the ethnic majority, – is on the one hand rather democratic, as it does not introduce any additional restrictions and is determined by personal choice of an individual. On the other hand, this interpretation raises at least two interrelated issues which encompass:

• relations between the majority and ethnic minority groups,

• relations between "traditional" and "new" minorities.

First, in a situation when the concept of "national minority" is based solely on the criterion of citizenship and the quantitative factor, we can talk about its "potential" dynamism. This means that a scenario is theoretically possible when ethnic Belarusian majority may become an ethnic minority in the country. It thus seems that the Belarusian legislation does not maintain any additional mechanisms to protect the rights of the ethnic majority.

Second, the same "dynamic" approach does not distinguish between "traditional" and "new" minorities. This raises the question, whether the Belarusian state ensures the rights of "traditional" minorities that constitute not only an integral part of the Belarusian society, but as a rule, represent the indigenous population.

These two factors raise the issue whether there is a need to introduce certain more restrictive criteria into the legislation of the Republic of Belarus on national minorities. Such criteria may include:

(1) "historicity" which is determined by strong ties to the state/territory and/or minimum period of actual presence in the area,

(2) a specified list of groups that are recognized as national minorities, which is also related to paragraph (1).

(3) minimal number of persons belonging to a particular minority.

In this case,

• paragraph (1) may be seen as a way of ensuring the rights of "traditional" minorities,

• paragraph (2) seems to provide a way of ensuring the rights of both "traditional" minorities and the ethnic majority,

• paragraph (3), provides an opportunity to limit the emergence of potentially indefinitely unlimited number of groups that can be considered ethnic minorities.

In its turn, the Belarusian law does not introduce any static criteria, which makes the concept of "national minority" within the context of the modern Belarusian legislation quite dynamic, and therefore totally dependent on the demographic processes in the country, with a potentially indefinitely unlimited number of groups that can be considered a national minority provided they meet the above-mentioned dynamic criteria.

Unlike Belarus, the examples of such countries as Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic or Poland show that they use additional "static" criteria in the definition of "national minority." These criteria can be divided into three groups:

• "historicity"/"traditionality" of actual presence of a minority within a country,

- invention of an exhaustive list of minorities, and
- a minimum number of persons required for an ethnic group to be considered a national minority.

These "static" (i.e. restrictive) criteria can be used in various combinations and contradict neither the principles of democracy, nor the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Therefore, the application of these "static" criteria cannot be interpreted as a limitation of minority rights and freedoms, but only as a measure to protect the interests and rights of both the ethnic majority and the "traditional" minorities. The exclusive use of a "dynamic" approach by the Belarusian legislator for protection of rights and legitimate interests of the major ethnic groups in contemporary Belarus does not ensure such a protection and puts further developments in direct dependence on the demographic situation. That is why the current approach of the Belarusian legislators toward the interpretation of the concept of "national minority" can undoubtedly be considered too liberal.

FURTHER SCENARIOS

After analyzing the current situation in the Belarusian legislation on interpretation of the notion "national minority," I can conclude that the application of a fully "dynamic" approach to its interpretation potentially does not consider legitimate interests and thus does not fully protect the rights of either the Belarusian ethnic majority or the "traditional" minorities, some of which represent autochthonous populations of the country.

The introduction of "static" criteria for the definition of "national minority" based on international experience described in the text with consideration of the specifics of the Belarusian society does not seem to be a measure which would substantially limit the rights of the minorities. Out of the above-mentioned three possible "static" criteria, two criteria might be considered the most effective: the "historicity"/"traditionality" and an invention of an exhaustive list of minorities, which, however, could be supplemented with new minorities, provided they meet the "dynamic" criteria. However, the introduction of the criterion of the minimum number of members for the "new" minorities seems in this case non-essential. Considering the mobility of the post-war Belarusian SSR population, criteria for historicity could be linked with the collapse of the Soviet Union. As for the list of minorities, it is appropriate to create it on the basis of the above-mentioned factors and the current situation. These changes in the Belarusian legislation could enhance the level of protection of the legitimate interests and rights of both the ethnic majority and the "traditional" minorities.

Editor's note:

The full version of this text has appeared as BR Working Paper #3. It can be downloaded from our website in PDF format. We would appreciate feedbacks and comments from our readers. Belarusian Review and The_Point Journal are open to new ideas and cooperation with new authors.

RETROSPECTIVE POSITIONS AND INTROSPECTIVE CRITIQUES: A BELARUSIST IN THE ACADEMIC TRENCHES[1]

M. PAULA SURVILLA

One arrives to the position of "senior" scholar, or rather to realizing 25+ years of professional residency in academia, with some shock. Perhaps this is because we are so busy in the business of teaching and producing discourse, that the arrival of such a milestone can catch one off-guard. It is precisely this position that offers hindsight and allows for a critical retrospective of ones field, discipline, and professional milieu. The anthropology of academia and the engagement in academic culture(s) further underlines how perspectives can vary with age, achievement, and the conditions available in the evolution of the individual career. Some stages remain somewhat generic: the nervous expectations of a graduate student, the optimism and caution of the junior scholar, the need to prove oneself in midcareer (tenure), and the "arrival" to senior scholar status (promotion). These stages reflect what can be considered traditional milestones for the scholar and imply successful indoctrination and entry into the academy, as well as a healthy teaching and publishing record. All shed light on the individual and subjective nature of personal experience in the academy. Certainly, these routes are often less obvious, less available, and for some less desirable. However, even as a generic career map, these stages are complicated by many factors: the popularity of a discipline, its positioning in the university, its place in regional hierarchies (such as in traditional area studies contexts), as well as by the political nuances that color life in a department. The purpose of this article, which is to provide a commentary on certain realities faced by Belarusists in the American and Canadian academic environment, requires an explanation of scope and of perspective.

The following commentary is divided according to several considerations. The first is the general expectation that Belarusian specialists would traditionally be housed in language and Slavic studies departments. In this model, the presence of Belarusists is tied to the conditions defining that broader academic environment and the overall health of that sector in the contemporary academy. Department and regional hierarchies, funding for humanities programs, and the demands of changing geopolitics are all implied.

As a senior scholar, I have followed the path outlined above and I have been both empowered and disadvantaged by my specialty. The reality is that, as a focus of research, Belarus is a rarity in American and Canadian academies and finding an environment where one is valued and can specifically teach to one's specialty is even rarer. In traditional Slavic studies departments, housing language, literature, or history specialists, undergraduate programs most often require Ru-

ssian, Polish, and Czech, as well as often unspecified additional languages available as secondary specialties and more likely taught by specialist adjuncts (part-time contract faculty). This absence of Belarus in general curricula about Eastern Europe has broader implications. Students considering Belarus do not find programs that reflect their specific interests, while Belarusists remain underrepresented in the make-up of such traditional departments.

There are many kinds of academic environments determined by the nature of the institution as well as by the nature of one's discipline. The type of institution can affect teaching load and publication expectations. The nature of funding, whether public or private, can also have an impact on the academic climate and the ability to fund academic offerings.

Attendance and interest at conferences correlates somewhat with citizenship in Slavic Studies departments that don't "mind" if one has a Belarusian specialty as long as one can also teach those areas that are considered mainstreamed, such as Russian. In terms of host discipline, scholars engaged in political science generally fare better, partly because their discourse is perceived as more obviously tied to policy debates and contemporary political critique.[2] As an ethnomusicologist, I have long been aware of the advantage of my discipline in presenting discourse about Belarus. Multidisciplinary by nature, ethnomusicology is a chameleon discipline that can claim residency in several academic communities. For example, I have given papers at political science conferences, literary symposia, popular culture conferences, ethnomusicology, history, and musicology conferences.

My first professional paper, given at the Canadian Association of Slavists meeting in Laval, Quebec in 1990, was an exercise in understanding the politics of Belarus's position in Slavic Studies environments. For me, as an ingénue in academia, this first experience identified several unexpected challenges that came to underline the "culture" of studying culture… of studying the culture of Eastern Europe, and of studying a politically disenfranchised nation both in its geopolitical location as well as in its location in academia.[3] In all of these, one walks the line between engagement and indifference from one's colleagues. As considered above, regional hierarchies can play a role in the level of professional interest and engagement, but so too does the geopolitical climate.

On a macro level, domestic and international economic and political developments also affect the support of academic positions. This is true of all specialties and reflects the supply and demand paradigm that has become typical of the corporate model in higher education. On a broad level, this management philosophy affects traditional domains, such as the humanities, in favor of areas that are seen to generate immediate profit in the working sector.[4] This is observable in diminishing funding to Slavic studies and Russian language programs, a trend that deems to adjust to perceived global priorities as well as to an erosion of administrative support for the humanities for anything beyond service-oriented course offerings. In the United States, in 2013, funding routes for Slavic and Eurasian area studies were severely affected by cuts to Title VIII monies. As Laura Adams (2013) writes:

> […] the funding situation for post-Soviet studies in 2013 is grim. It is not just the current pressure to cut the federal budget that is our sword of Damocles, but also a growing sentiment in Washington and elsewhere that area studies in general should be sustained by the universities now, and that post-Soviet studies in particular is obsolete.[5]

That year saw a series of debates about and many cuts to Slavic Studies programs in several universities. Especially telling were campaigns for garnering moral and financial support from the private sector as well as some targeted lobbying to ensure the support of federal funding, (where such mechanisms were possible). Languages now at risk, such as Russian, Czech, and Polish, seem strangely placed in the context of lobbying for increased attention to Belarusian studies. The current situation simply emphasizes that Belarusian has, and continues to be fundamentally absent from such concerns.[6] In light of events in Crimea and Ukraine since early 2014, the spotlight is now nervously pointed back towards Eastern Europe and agencies are more aware of a shortage in area and language specialists.[7] The lack of specialists and the strategic perspectives they can no longer contribute to policy considerations considerably weakens the ability of Western governments to understand the post-Soviet environment (Adams, Russia Direct 2.24.2015).[8] Since academic engagement, discourse, and funding, are methods of gauging the policy pulse of a government, it is possible that Putin had become aware that the West was no longer glancing their way.

In light of the current challenges and the overall economic impact of Slavic Studies, how does the Belarusist scholar carve out a place in the academy, as a student, as a professional, and as a contributor to discourse (assuming that one has the training, ability, and disposition to survive academia in general).

As an ethnomusicology student, future post-Soviet rock scholar and Belarusist, I was keenly aware that my research choices were rather unique. My field was, in the early 1990s, somewhat unusual (especially in the face of Western Classical music in academic departments), and rock music studies were then, unlike now, a "light" subject. Belarus was underrepresented or simply missing in Western European and in English-language resources, and certainly not a central focus for my field (ethnomusicology was then energized by African and south-east Asian studies).

As far as employability in ethnomusicology/music departments, the absence of what could be considered as a mainstream research interest was also problematic. Ethnomusicologists were and are often reduced to exotic world culture hires for departments and universities because, the more exotic the location, the more obvious the suggested "global awareness" of the institution. Aside from being on the fringes as a popular music specialist, for me, Belarus seemed to function both as an exotic and a lackluster location.

In best-case scenarios, being considered exotic could be a benefit, providing some cachet in academic discourse and publication by virtue of the rarity of one's subject. In worst cases, Belarus was too close to Europe, or was simply unrecognized except for having been near Chernobyl. A defining aspect of my academic career has been the defense of my academic focus while affirming the very existence of the country and culture I had chosen to study. Admittedly, the need for primary explanations about Belarus has diminished over the last few decades, though the interest of my peers in Slavic Studies conference environments remains uneven. My successful presence in academia is then partly tied to my own discipline, to the fact that I am not housed in a Slavic Studies milieu, and, most importantly, that I am trained to and willing to teach a wide spectrum of issue-based topics implied in Western and non-western contexts. In the classroom, as a member of a music faculty, my Belarusian specialty becomes embedded in and offered to students through courses on music and protest, courses on identity formation and music, courses on popular culture theory. In addition to the department, the nature of the institution can affect the impact of one specialty on one's career. I have spent my entire career teaching in a private undergraduate institution with a tradition of offering arts and the humanities courses supportive of its liberal arts mandate. Though no other eastern Europeanist nor ethnomusicologist is present at my school, I have long wondered if my institution offered a different level of autonomy that affected the valueing of my work and that expanded my academic choices in both departmental and college teaching.

As a music scholar and as a scholar of music in an eastern European context, several key factors have had a defining impact on my experience and on the scope of the discourse I produced, its content, its tone, and its intent. The first, is defined by the role of personal identity as a foundational aspect in the interpretive exercise that is culture studies. For me this implied my cultural residency within the Belarusian Diaspora. The second considers the logistics of pursuing research based on ethnography with the advent of new technologies. Modes of research are deeply implied in a rapidly changing research environment such as Belarus, where expectations for positive change collide with a political climate defined by increasing restriction and isolationism. The changing political landscape of Belarus in the twentieth century, since the pivotal declaration of sovereignty in 1991, and the more recent events in the broader geopolitical context of Ukraine and Russia are also key. It is then also important to consider the broader implications of scholarship in relation to the potential for generating change. That is, where and when can and should our discourse intersect with the world of policy formation, negotiation, and advocacy.

The place of personal identity has had a complex role in the field of ethnomusicology. The field itself, an offshoot of anthropology that developed most formally in the 1950s, has been shaped by an awareness of how colonialism and ethnocentrisms have affected discourse based on research by cultural outsiders (Western researchers) observing and writing about the other (non-Western peoples and locations). How does the subjectivity of the researcher herself, as a product of her own enculturation, affect the outcome of the cultural representation they have chosen to contribute to the literature through the questions asked, the details observed, and the conclusions presented? Thus, the researcher is recognized as a defining presence and as an unavoidable starting point to the representation of those being studied.

As a result, in the early 1990s, ethnomusicology was tasked with revealing those subjectivities as formative in the production of discourse. My own preface to my first book, based on fieldwork in Belarus was necessarily an examination of how my research and scholar's voice was shaped by my own identity. In simultaneously writing a volume about process and context, the strongest challenge was to maintain focus on the subject of the research itself so that the discourse was not about the researcher but about the culture being studied. It was the most difficult chapter to write and became the longest of the book. If I were to write the same preface today, I would still self-identify, still grapple with how many perspectives shape my work, but perhaps I would do so more efficiently.

When I entered the field in the 1990s, an additional shift in the positioning of the researcher was taking place. Many students of ethnomusicology were beginning to study their own cultures and the relationship between outsider researcher and insider culture became increasingly complex. Many graduate students were, as members of their cultural Diasporas, very specific types of outsiders. They conducted research in homeland environments, knowing much about the details of culture (language, traditions) but not necessarily about how context affected broader behaviors and cultural values. Studying your own culture placed you in a new territory that on the surface promised an easier process of adaptation and of representation. In reality, this could prove even more problematic because it placed you on the fringes of knowing and not knowing. One could have knowledge about ritual life, for example, but understanding how identities and social cues in a freshly post-Soviet society were not so evident through the lens of one's social assumptions and experiences.

Views of and about the Diaspora also have the potential to color academic work and reception. This is especially evident when popular culture, not canonic work, is the topic at hand. Studying popular music, for example, requires time with musicians, the observation of the creative process, investigation of mechanisms of dissemination, and contact with the fans. The music is fluid and so are the details of its cultural moment. Unless one lives in the midst of one's subject, research of this type presents some particular challenges, and staying current is a conceptual and concrete race where the researcher is always running behind.

As I began to produce more and more discourse about Belarusian rock, other challenges and attitudes emerged related to expertise and ownership: What conditions made one an expert, and who had the right to study a topic in the first place? On a secular level (here used as non-academic), some

express the opinion that discourse about Belarus should only be produced by those living in the midst of the culture itself. Cultural ownership is part of this dynamic, the idea that cultural interpretation is the purview of the local scholar. This is complicated by the importance of contact in field-dependent research, and by the realities of travel restrictions and political dangers that for some have encouraged virtual ethnography as a methodology. For some contexts, ownership of a subject can also imply that only one scholar, an insider, can write about a culture group, a literary figure, or a rock culture.

This is where the fuzzy divide between Belarusian as diaspora member and local Belarusian becomes evident and somewhat painful, since, for some, your residence in a Belarusian Diaspora does not make you any kind of insider. It is also the case that the notion of studying the "other", so central to anthropology-related disciplines in Western scholarship, is strange and even bizarre to culture groups who have strong local intellectual production and less long-term experience with global academic discourses. Add to this the notion of singular ownership of a subject and the non-local scholar becomes even more problematic.

I have thought much, through the lens of ethnomusicology, about the contrasts and implications of Belarus as topic. Generally, topics are not owned, but rather it is the details of interpretation that mark one's scholarship and discourse contribution as unique. In ethnomusicology, multiple discourses from voices in the same field are desirable. The work of Belarusian ethnomusicologists and ethnographers is rich and much published. What is missing, as with much scholarship, is the effort to democratize the discourse: to have access to the work of scholars on a particular cultural inside as well as that from those outside the cultural context. This is a logistical challenge that implies enormous efforts at translation and intellectual exchange. There are two aspects here. Many scholars independently working on one area produces better discourse and richer representations of culture (here the classic example would be the number of gamelan scholars in ethnomusicology). We have come to recognize the arrogance of a Western-centric valuing of our own discourse as contrasted with the development of the field in non-Western academic environments.

Discourse from various disciplines also provides healthy variety but these are not interchangeable. For example, in popular culture studies the techniques, modes of dissemination, and strategies of analysis are not the same in journalism and in academic production. Those working and writing as journalists produce much of what is written about Belarusian language rock music, and they do so very well. The academic scholar of this rock music, and more so the ambiguous insider/outsider Diaspora "western" academic, "me" brings even more complexity into the perception of my identity and my scholarship.

Identity and its many permutations began my journey as a Belarusist and subsequently revealed much as I moved onto the academic stage. Self-identification, group allocation (Diaspora), the broader categories of Western and non-western, the reception of cultural geography, and the expectations and outside perceptions of ones discipline and even of the genre studied –all of these were constant companions in my work. The disconnects between identity, expertise, and ownership have manifested in singular yet powerful experiences, and while I understand that such critiques do not reflect broader attitudes, they gave me much pause to question my work and the logistical realities of doing it. As I have suggested above, I believe these experiences are the result of ethnocentric understanding of disciplines, and a limited understanding of differing trends and the various actors implied cultural interpretation, especially in relation to Rock.

At one, then AAASS, conference, a fellow colleague refuted the power of Belarusian-language rock music because she had never met anyone who listened to it. I responded by saying that she had not searched out those fans and had not, as a result recognized the fans nor the music. As a consumer, she was not drawn to those bands, and as a researcher, she had not recognized them outside of her own research focus. Clearly in any cultural construct one must avoid broad gestures of analysis, i.e., statistical data generating broad macro statements, here about Belarusian culture and musical taste. Broad statement would deny the reality of varied cultural attitudes, personal taste, membership in subcultural groups (rock culture) and the impact of underground movements.

Throughout the years, generating discourse on Belarusian-language rock also meant being imaginative about identifying academic communities that would welcome my area as part of their own broader intellectual frameworks. Presenting papers at Slavic Studies conferences and ethnomusicology conferences was the most obvious strategy. But reaching for other modes of questioning came as the result of wanting to experience other disciplines as well. Conferences on popular music, though mostly focused on Western and British trends, also offered opportunities to explore broader frameworks: the role of language, the positioning of women in the movement, and the increasing use of social media and other modes of dissemination, including the web and radio programming. These also reflected the increased dependence on virtual ethnography in my work as Lukashenka's administration blacklisted Belarusian musicians and I became hyper-cautious about how I communicated with the rock groups highlighted in my work. Though I am gratified to have shifted gears often, the political landscape of Belarus did fundamentally shift the directions I thought I would take in my long-term work. This aspect of research affects fellow scholars in different ways according to the research requirements of their work, the political nature of their discourse, or the dependence on ethnography methods.

On a practical referential level, the varied audiences I face in presenting my work also changed the ways in which I needed to present the cultural contexts of Belarusian rock. It is here that the discourse itself, by virtue of the topic, evolves into political advocacy, a process that demands the identification of, not only, your specific subject, Belarusian-language

rock, but also the reference points needed to understand the political and cultural conditions that define Belarus itself. Since Belarusian-language rock has, since its emergence in the 1980s, been engaged in overt protest and in identity exploration, events from Chernobyl to the elections in 2010 become necessary preambles and frames to the music itself. Writing about Belarusian rock music is partly about announcing Belarusian identities, countering misconceptions about the history of the region, and even considering the strategies of foreign policy. This was the case in my last article on the intersection between Belarusian rock music and classical and public diplomacy.

Though I am not alone in having to explain context in relation to my topic, it is a constant presence in my work and this constancy reflects the reality that Belarus continues to be underrepresented in Slavic studies, academic discourse, and the media in general. In such conditions, scholars become advocates for representing broader constructs, beyond the details of their particular research topics. It is necessary but tiresome, for example, the explanation of historical perspectives and politicized viewpoints about identity in Eastern Europe, primarily between Russia and Belarus. I recall early in my career begging my doctoral advisor to skip writing the chapter on Belarusian history since it was something that my committee should already know. They didn't, and I wrote it. My advisor, a wonderful Javanese specialist and formative mentor, did not have to advocate for identities in her work the same way. She viewed my statements as overtly passionate and, while she understood my frustrations, she wisely taught that the power of the pen was tied to persuasion and she, "helped me tone it down." I continue to be cautious about multiple viewpoints and the conditions under which other scholars generate their work. Whether obvious or implied, scholars can excel at communicating much through their prose and their work has the potential of changing the global intellectual perceptions of a country, of a movement, and of historical experience.

It is not without some irony that after many years of writing and teaching I came to another manifestation of advocacy for Belarus. Still based on my academic credentials and on the impact of higher education, I was brought into the world of political advocacy at the policy level when I became the Executive Director of the Center for Belarusian Studies. Centers focused on Eastern Europe are found in many universities, but one dedicated to Belarus had, until 2007 not existed in North America and few established centers have specialists on Belarus who actually teach about Belarus. Though many of our CBS initiatives are based in higher education programming as a means to encourage healthy civil society in Belarus, it is on the political stage that I have been learning that advocacy for change is very different from advocacy for knowledge/education (though these are interrelated). Sitting in waiting rooms in the US Capital, speaking with State Department representatives, giving lectures in the EU on the role of higher education in democracy development, and developing symposia that bring together specialists from and outside of Belarus– all of these have provided me a formidable education. It seems that this is also the necessary role of the Belarusist, and of those engaged in writing about any nation on the fringe. I also realize that many well-trained scholars do not see advocacy as part of their work.

Advocacy for change has become more prevalent since events in Ukraine and Crimea. Aided by the use of social media, especially twitter and Facebook, scholars post and repost articles and editorials about current events in Ukraine, and the EEEASS does much to continue the flow of these resources. Critiques about bias and viewpoint are also engaging and necessary. But I fear that the audience is a closed one. We are reading each other, but few outside Slavic studies are drawn to the discourse and the wealth of foundational and current information they provide. Reaching other audiences becomes the means through which our discourse might affect some change in public awareness and political action: a hard task– but a necessary goal. We need to make more noise, not just through our discourse and our classrooms, but also in those places where decisions are made. This might also affect the perception that Slavic Studies are passé. This is a tall order, but if our discourse is going to matter it needs to resonate throughout the intellectual community and we, physically need to place ourselves in those waiting rooms and make ourselves heard, even by shear stubborn and unwavering repetition.

Throughout my growing awareness of the challenges of identity, of studying a non-canonic genre through a non--traditional disciplinary lens, of strategizing around the restrictive politics of my research area, and the conditions of my academic environment, I have considered the nature of my voice as a Belarusian-Belarusist passionate about the culture and the music I am privileged to study. What I have come to experience is not what I expected, and the adjustments made in research and in my work have been as much a part of my discourse as has the song, the fan, the rock singer, and the programming. I see my earlier discourse as necessarily naïve, full of expectation for an enthusiastic reception of my area and my topic. But that enthusiasm is not the nature of academic exchange and constructing a place for oneself and ones topic is a hard battle to wage. No romance here – but with luck and obstinate effort one can experience occasional satisfaction.

REFERENCES:

[1] A portion of this paper was presented as "Retrospective Positions and Introspective Critiques: Two Decades of Belarusian Popular Music Research" during the Canadian Association of Slavists Annual Meeting under the auspices of the 50 th Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Brock University, 24.06.2014.

[2] In reality, humanities disciplines in general have much to contribute to policy formation. Many disciplines are not overtly associated with such real-time impact or expertise however. I am continually surprised by the opinion that the expressive arts sit somehow on the periphery of political process, since music is deeply political and can affect opinion and direction on the political stage. See Survilla, M. Paula. "Music

and Mediation from the Embassy to the Underground" In Music and Diplomacy, ed. Rebekah Ahrendt, Damien Mahiet, and Mark Ferraguto. (London: Palgrave, 2014).

[3] In Canada, this latter "location" meant that Belarus was on the fringes of broad and healthy Slavic studies communities focused on Russian, but especially on Ukrainian studies. This was due to the strong and long-term presence of a Ukrainian Diaspora in the Prairie Provinces.

[4] Philosopher Martha Nussbaum speaks of one challenge that she believes is detrimental to the development of healthy societies on a global level. She explores how current associations between successful "wealthy" nations, higher education, and economic gain have eclipsed the importance of the thinker in favor of the technician, here someone whose education is controlled and lacking scope or who is motivated by material enrichment alone. Nussbaum, Martha. „Education for Profit, Education for Freedom." Liberal Education, 1.01.2009, 6-13.

[5] See: Adams, Laura. „The Crisis of US Funding for Area Studies." Newsnet, 1.03.2013. Title VIII funding which had supported fellowships and research through the awarding of federal funding to academic and research foundations did not receive an appropriation in 2013 severaly affecting Slavic and Eurasian study programs. See „Federal Cuts for Eurasian and Eastern European Studies." Inside Higher Ed. October 23, 2013. Accessed 8.02.2015. https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2013/10/23/federal-cuts-eurasian-and-eastern--european-studies.).

[6] See: University of Glascow lobbies Scottish parliament (accessed 12.01.2015, „Save the School of Modern Languages and Cultures." University of Glascow. Accessed 22.02.2015. https://savesmlc.wordpress.com/.

[7] "Russian is considered a language vital to national security, there are special scholarship opportunities available that do not apply to the other Slavic languages." „Slavic Language And Literature Scholarships." College Scholarships.org. Accessed 22.02.2015. http://www.collegescholarships.org/scholarships/language/slavic.htm.

[8] Adams, Laura. „Why America Needs to Fund the next Generation of Russia Scholars." Russia Direct, 5.11.2013.

Author: Dr. M. Paula Survilla holds a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology/Musicology from the University of Michigan. She is Professor of Music at Wartburg College where she holds the endowed Slife Professorship in the Humanities. As an ethnomusicologist specializing in the music of Belarus, her research interests include the role of contemporary music (urban rock and popular genres as well as rural ritual music) in the construction of personal and national identities in post-Soviet Belarus. Her latest work considers Belarusian music in the context of radio programming, social media, and diplomacy. She is past President (2005-2010) of the North American Association for Belarusian Studies; She served as Vice-President from 2003-2005. In addition to her position at Wartburg College, Dr. Survilla serves as Executive Director of the Center for Belarusian Studies (www.belarusiancenter.org). The Center's mission is to enable the healthy development of democratic civil society in Belarus through Higher education initiatives.

BELARUS: REPRESSION CONTINUES DESPITE WARMER RELATIONS WITH THE WEST

VALERY KAVALEUSKI

The conflict in Ukraine that began last year provided Belarusian president Alyaksandr Lukashenka with new space for political maneuvering. Russia's threat to international peace and security changed the perception of the Belarusian regime. Compared with the challenges and risks in Ukraine, Belarus is now viewed as an island of stability and reason, albeit visibly subdued by long-standing authoritarian practices. The United States and European Union have softened their criticism of the human rights situation and taken a series of steps to normalize relations. Lukashenka, however, remains true to his repressive policies.

There are six well-known political prisoners behind bars and Lukashenka dismisses all calls to release them, not to mention their rehabilitation. He continues to strengthen the framework of his authoritarian system. In a further attempt to tighten its grip on the flow of information, the government introduced amendments to the Law on Mass Media that came into force on January 1, 2015. The new restrictions make it easier to block any undesirable internet sites. In keeping with the traditions of Lukashenka's regime, the law was adopted without any public discussion or input from civil society or independent journalist organizations.

The conflict in Ukraine pushed Lukashenka to introduce amendments to legislation on martial law. The law, as of February 1, 2015, includes a new toolbox to restrict political rights and freedoms in a system that already has very little space for independent thinking and action. In particular, if martial law is declared, parliamentary and presidential elections as well as referenda cannot be held as long as it remains in effect. Therefore, the powers of the sitting president and parliament are extended until martial law is lifted. The law also prohibits any kind of protest and severely restricts the flow of information. The state can violate the privacy of citizens at will, arresting and searching them without any authorization from a prosecutor or court. Also, the law exempts security personnel from responsibility when using deadly force.

A looming economic crisis is pushing the government to explore other extraordinary ideas. Currently, it is preparing to introduce a presidential decree "On preventing social parasitism" that would levy a special annual tax on those Belarusians who for various reasons do not work and/or do not pay taxes. The main grievance of the government is that such people do not pay taxes but use social services like education and health care. At the same time, the tax is designed not just to extract money, but also to force "social parasites" to start working. It is not clear how the government defines "social parasites." The public does not have access to the draft decree and cannot participate in deliberations on its content.

Amid the conflict in Ukraine, growing economic troubles, and Russia's unpredictable behavior, Belarus is preparing for its presidential election. The opposition has not recovered since the crackdown after the 2010 election. It is illustrative that seven months before the planned vote, the opposition forces cannot agree on a strategy to challenge Lukashenka. It is not clear who will participate in the campaign, whether there will be a single opposition candidate, or whether the opposition will boycott the election.

Events in Ukraine have simultaneously inspired and confused the democratic forces of Belarus. The 2014 protests were an example of a successful popular uprising against a corrupt regime. But Russia subsequently proved that it would stop at nothing to disrupt Ukraine's choice of a European future.

In the minds of many in Belarus, similar protests against Lukashenka's pro-Moscow regime would inevitably lead to Russia's direct interference, possibly military, and eventually to the loss of independence. The Belarusian opposition is debating whether it is a sound idea to challenge Lukashenka at all when the nation should be uniting in the face of looming Russian aggression. Moreover, election strategy demands that the opposition forces distance themselves from the Kremlin and Russian funding sources as far as possible. Before the 2010 election, some candidates sought support from Kremlin circles to enhance their standing and improve finances. This year such connections with an aggressive power would be seen as extremely controversial.

Lukashenka has proved over nearly 21 years that his ultimate interest is to stay in power indefinitely. This time, in order to defend his seat, he should be concerned about Russia's possible actions, not the opposition. But Lukashenka cares about the sovereignty and independence of Belarus only so long as they coincide with his personal interest. It was his policies that brought Belarus to its current extremely precarious and vulnerable position of profound dependence on Russia and lack of foreign policy alternatives.

An analysis of the recent changes in foreign policy and continued domestic repression leads to the conclusion that Lukashenka wants to outlive the crisis without dismantling his power model, which has served him so well. The new approach of the West offers him enough space to gain political points while keeping civil society and the opposition in check.

There is no doubt that helping Ukraine to defend its statehood is an urgent priority for the West. But this priority could overshadow the prospect of a democratic Belarus. Moreover, it is not obvious that this new diplomatic approach would actually help Belarus to withstand Russian pressure and preserve its independence. The resilience of Belarus requires reengagement between state and society. The international reengagement with Lukashenka, who refuses to change, strengthens his regime but not the nation.

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FORUM

UPPER SILESIA AS AN EXAMPLE?

ANDRZEJ TICHOMIROW

Preservation of ethnic roots (language, folklore, traditions and everyday culture) is an acute problem for Belarusians. A burst of interest in the Belarusian traditions during the last year was materialised in various forms, including *vyšyvanka* (traditional Belarusian clothing which contains elements of ethnic embroidery) and public courses of the Belarusian language. This trend demonstrated actual demand for the national tradition among the new generation of Belarusians. Detachment from the "rural roots" in the second or even third generation implies that for a part of urban youth there is an acute problem of perception of own ethnic affiliation. The war in Ukraine accompanied by diplomatic, humanitarian and economic crisis have also intensified the willingness of some Belarusians to "materialise" not only their affiliation with Belarus but also with the Belarusian nation. This demand coincided with the government's attempts to enhance its legitimization against the background of the events in Ukraine. The former support of the Belarusian identity embodied in rather ghettoized forms of "folkloric", "situational" and "supplementary" expressions was substituted with a cautious approval of some civic initiatives previously interpreted as manifestations of "nationalism".

Recent mass events, particularly the 2014 IIHF World Championship, have clearly modified the attitude towards own ethnic distinctiveness. The World Championship advertising campaign, changes in the urban spaces (particularly in the Minsk metro and in the tourist sphere) and radicalization of ethnicity in our part of Europe have demonstrated the potential for a national mobilisation. However, the question remains whether the ethnicity is could be preserved without an approval from the authorities? Can the ethnic and language distinctiveness exist without a support of the education system, cultural institutions or legislation?

It is worthwhile to focus on a some European territories which have managed to preserve their distinctive identity over a long period of time, though they never had own state always being a part of various state formations. Located mainly in Poland (and partially in the Czech Republic), Upper Silesia (*Gorny Śląsk, Oberschläsing, Gůrny Ślůnsk*) can be a profound example of the preservation of ethnic distinctiveness without any government support or even despite it.

The region has a very complicated history. Over centuries it has been an ideal example of a very multi-faceted ethnic, linguistic and religious frontier. Upper Silesia belonged to medieval Poland and the Czech Crown, the Austrian Empire, Prussia and the German Empire. It survived a division between Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia after the World

War I. After the World War II it again became a part of Poland. Ethnic processes in this territory were extremely complex and resulted in formation of a multi-level identity and multilingualism, and moreover, in the emergence of an own language. Indeed, such a situation is not unique in Europe. However, this is one of the closest examples to Belarus, in terms of own identity's preservation without an expressive government impact or support over the last decades.



According to the Polish social thought, Silesians are a part of the Polish nation, though with some ethnic peculiarities. Discussions over the essence of the Silesian language/dialect have been held over a long period of time. Most of philologists tend to consider the difference between a language and a dialect to be rather a political, and not scientific factor. I should note that the difference between various Upper Silesian dialects is still very expressive. Thus, the locals can immediately recognise their interlocutor's origin within the region. The attempts to elaborate a common standard for the Silesian language/dialect have been undertaken only during the last two decades and this issue still remains a subject of discussions. The media also started using the Silesian language/dialect only during the last two decades and this trend is growing.

Everyone coming to Upper Silesia can immediately feel its distinctiveness, primarily due to the formation of the peculiar urban culture influenced by the coal-mining industry which has dominated the region over the last 150 years. Silesian towns are an outstanding research subject for urbanists who can find here an profound example of a natural urban agglomeration consisting of over a dozen towns. Industrial architecture, a well-developed transport network with railways and an integrated tram system, an eloquent feeling of unity with a simultaneous preservation of each town's identity do create an outstanding atmosphere.

Perhaps, one of the first impressions noted by a tourist is that the locals preserve their language. The Silesian language is used everywhere – in shops, in the streets, in trams and offices. Still, the Polish language does not lack in the region and there are no communication problems. However, not only older generation, but also youth is able to speak the native language. What is more important, they are not ashamed to speak it. Thus, they preserve their native language as the sole language at home and in everyday life. At the same time, school education uses Polish language and no one have ever tried to introduce Silesian the language of education or training on a bigger scale. Still, the local language is alive and supported by many enthusiasts. Many Belarusians would see this situation as "strange" because the Silesian language exists in a very urbanised environment (moreover, this urbanisation had taken place already by the end of the 19th century) and until recently it had been not codified.

The region's main wealth is coal. It has determined a particular attention of the Polish government towards Upper Silesia already in the interwar years. Before the Second World war, the Silesian region had an autonomous status with its own Sejm (parliament), legislation, budget, and even two official languages – Polish and German. After the World War II, the local industry and social infrastructure was supported by extensive investments which, however, despite migration had not affected the region's visible ethnic and cultural distinctiveness. The locals did have own historical memories, different from other regions of Poland. Moreover, despite the changes of administrative borders they even felt their region's "imaginary borders".

The contemporary movement for the restoration of the region's autonomy is still difficult to assess. On the one hand, it has some expressive separatist traits and to some extent tries to prove the continuity of the interwar autonomy's tradition (although, the loyalty to the Polish state and its territorial integrity is almost always underlined). On the other hand, it emphasizes the trend towards regionalization in the EU when certain competences are transferred to the regional/local authorities. However, any endeavours to maintain a representative political establishment without the existing ethnic base (local language peculiarities/dialects, urban culture, folklore and historical identity) would be totally meaningless. Polish legislation does not acknowledge Silesians as a distinct ethnic group. Neither it recognizes their language as a regional (unlike Kashubian) or a minority language (unlike Belarusian, German or Ukrainian). Moreover, there is no pronounced tendency to alter this situation. Still, a distinct language and an unique identity are alive and they are passed down to the future generations. It happens without a government, without a budget and without "an approval from the top". Indeed, one may wonder, for how long would the Silesians be able to preserve their identity in the time of globalisation and multilingual daily routine? The perseverance of expressive social ties under adversity bolsters up the identity and constitutes the indubitable wealth of the region and the entire country.

Despite its substantial historical and geographical differences, the example of Upper Silesia could be of a great interest for Belarusians. Even amid the unfavorable environment, people are able to appreciate, preserve, promote and pass their own language to the future generations.

JEWISH SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR II

CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY (8-10.12.2014)

LEONID SMILOVITSKY

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that we all know about the last Great War (1939-1945), just as the current generation of people does need its experience and knowledge. Soon after Nazi Germany's defeat, when the world community was disconnected by the confrontation between East and West, each of the parties reviewed the results of the war in its own way.

A reassessment of values requires the abandonment of stereotypes. One of the most enduring myths was that the Jews did not fight – they could not, did not want, or were afraid. And this is despite the existing statistics suggesting the opposite. During World War II, the armies of the Allied Powers involved at least one and a half million Jews, including 556,000 in the US Army and 500,000 in the Red Army. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish soldiers were killed and more than 350,000 suffered injuries, one in three – hard ones. Tens of thousands received government awards, occupied high command positions, and constituted a significant part of the officer corps... Why then they "did not fight"?

The secret was that they fought not as Jews, but as the soldiers of the army in which they served. Ethnic identity was not emphasized. A Jewish soldier of the Red Army was a "Russian", within the US Army – an American, within the French army – a Frenchman, etc. The only exception was the Jewish Brigade in the British Army. It was formed in September 1944 in Mandatory Palestine and included 5,000 soldiers, all serving as volunteers.

What was the real contribution of the Jewish soldiers in World War II? This issue was discussed at an international conference *Jewish Soldiers in World War II*, held at the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University in December 8-10, 2014.

PARTICIPANTS

The conference *Jewish Soldiers in World War II* gathered 18 scholars from eight countries: Israel, USA, Canada, UK, France, Russia, Germany, and Slovenia. One should also count students and external visitors; the entry was free. The conference participants represented Tel Aviv University, Bar-Ilan University, Open University of Israel, Yad Vashem, Museum of the Jewish Soldier in WWII in Latrun, Center for Documentation on North-African Jewry during WWII, Humboldt University of Berlin, Universities of Michigan, Oxford, Sussex, and Toronto.

English was the working language of the conference. On the one hand, it underlined the status of this scientific meeting. On the other hand, it had practical significance, since not all participants and guests could understand Hebrew. At the same time, this confirmed wide participation of Israeli scholars in the international scientific community. In the lobby Russian speech was heard along with Hebrew and English.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

The conference was devoted to two major events in 1944 that affected the outcome of the World War II. This is the 70th anniversary of the Anglo-American landings in Normandy (June 6, 1944) and Operation Bagration (June 23 - August 29, 1944), the most extensive operation of the entire war. The opening of a second front by the Allies became a reality. The territories of Belarus, eastern Poland and a part of the Baltics were liberated. The Red Army crossed the state border of the USSR. Military operations were transferred to the European territories occupied by Germany.

Some of participants prepared illustrated materials in the form of presentations. I was also among them. My paper "Creation of a collection of wartime correspondence in the Diaspora Research Centre at Tel Aviv University" was based on a live story with slideshow of wartime letters and diaries. Some of them were sent from the army, while others – from the evacuation areas. The letters were supplemented by the stories about the fates of the people at war and by what researchers call the sources of personal origin - (employer's statements, commendation lists, certificates of awards, narrative biographies, soldiers and officers ID books, mobilization orders, death notices, etc.

Soviet wartime envelopes and letter-paper bristled with demands for the defeat of Germany. They leave a lasting impression when one sees the names of who wrote what to whom – Ioffe, Aizenshtat, Livshits, Epstein, Avin, Schwartz, Rabinovich, Kaganovich, Lieberman, Pinkhasik and others. Since 1942, the German policy aimed at total extermination of Jews was out in the open. Therefore, for Soviet Jews calls of the Soviet authorities to "take revenge", "kill the Germans" and similar made especially profound sense.

In general, correspondence leaves an indelible impression on the experiences, feelings, hopes, everyday news, reactions to the news from the battlefields, stories about studies, work, life in the evacuation and, in turn, life at the front. Letters contain many important details and examples that feels like wartime.

The atmosphere at the conference at Tel Aviv University was friendly. Participants and students made notes not only in the writing pads distributed by the organizers, but also used iPads, netbooks, laptops and even mobile phones. Nobody was asked to turn off recorders and taking pictures was permitted. As you know, modern technologies allows not only for recording of the events, but for immediately publishing on the Internet.

On the eve of the conference organizers posted a message on Twitter about it in Hebrew. We all know enormous possibilities of modern social networks. The feedbacks from the second- and third-generations of WWII participants were substantial. These are the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jewish soldiers of the Red Army who fought against the Nazis. They do not speak or write in Russian, but their reaction to the message on social networks was instant.

And everyone hurried to share episodes of their family history, offered by his/her involvement in preserving the memory of Jewish soldiers from the war, wrote about photographs and personal documents from their family archives.

Here is one example – Nathan Kagan from Hrodna (Russian and Polish: *Grodno*). In 1941, he had fled the city just before the German troops entered it. All his relatives remained, as they did not believe that they could expect mortal danger. In 1942 a young man comes to the Red Army. While capturing Budapest in February 1945, in the synagogue and mikveh he sees bodies of dead Jews stacked like firewood up to the brim. Soviet soldiers, his comrades, showed him out: "Your brothers are killed here – you cannot look at it. Your people perished, but we will protect you, you have to live." After the war, Nathan went to Israel. Up to 1989 his children did not know that their dad understands Russian. Then all suddenly "burst." Today Nathan is over 90. He was the only survivor of the Kagans from Hrodna. Senile dementia is beginning to tell. Nathan does not remember his childhood and what was after the war; he only talks about his service in the Red Army, the war with Germans...

It is clear that I will do whatever is necessary to get the most valuable documents for the archive at the Diaspora Center, or at least to make copies.

MAIN IDEAS OF THE CONFERENCE

- Jews were not only suffering, but also fought. They were not only the main target of the Nazi killing machine, but also actively resisted, and above all, as an integral part of the armies of the Allied Powers.
- Motivation of the Jews who put on military uniforms. During four years of the war 490,000 to 520,000 young Jews were drafted into the Red Army or joined it voluntarily. What did they fight for? For the socialist motherland, the Soviet system, comrade Stalin, or for their homes, their friends and relatives who had fled from the enemy?
- The problem of national identity. Devoid of tradition, separated from religion, lacking knowledge of Yiddish (or rejecting it), many Jews sincerely considered themselves Soviet people. At the same time, the state and the surrounding Slavic and non-Slavic neighbors (friends, acquaintances, colleagues, or fellow soldiers) continued to identify them as Jews.
- The commanders' and fellow soldiers' stance on the Jewish soldiers and commanders. Anti-Semitism was gaining ground during the war (in the rear and at the front) and this made the Jewish population largely vulnerable.
- Contribution to the common victory over Nazi Germany
- Coverage of Jewish heroism in literature, journalism, visual arts, theater and cinema.

One of the most informative reports regularly was a presentation by Professor Zvi Gitelman from the University of Michigan "Why they fought: Soviet and other Jewish soldiers in World War II." Being fluent in English, Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian and Polish, Professor Gitelman convincingly demonstrated commonality and difference between American and Soviet Jews who fought against the Nazis, as well as the stance of their commanders and colleagues alike and the portrayal of Jews among their fellow soldiers.

General Gershon ha-Cohen from the Israeli Ministry of Defense spoke about the formation of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) which embraced the tradition of Jewish World War II veterans who joined in with the units of the Israeli War of Independence in 1948.

ON THE SIDELINES

When the break was announced, I went out into the corridor. I was looking for some conversation about my research interests and asked whether anyone had their family roots in Belarus? A Professor from Canada told me that in the late 19th century one of his great-grandfather emigrated to Palestine from Minsk, and the other one – from Vaŭkavysk (Russian: *Volkovysk*, Polish: *Wołkowysk*). Should one get surprised? Father of Dr. Simha Goldin, director of the Diaspora Research Center, was born in Volpa. The family of Professor Zvi Gitelman moved to the United States from Pinsk. Grandfather of Zvi Kan-Tor, director of the Museum of the Jewish Soldier in WWII in Latrun, was a rabbi from Slonim, and grandfather of Professor Derek Jonathan Penslar from the University of Oxford was born in the borough of Kruhlaje (Russian: *Krugloe*, Polish: *Kruhłe*), Minsk province…

The Belarus-related topics were directly addressed in the presentation of Dr. Lea Prais from Yad Vashem. She reported about the Jewish family camps in the forests of western Belarus, a unique phenomenon in the history of the World War II. Finally, my doctoral student Leon Gershovich is preparing a thesis on Jewish life in southeastern Belarus on the example of the city of Homieĺ (Russian: *Gomel*, Polish: *Homel*).

CONCLUSION

The topic of armed resistance of Jews during the WWII is not idle. It goes far beyond academic interest. I listened to the presentations of the conference speakers on the contribution of the Jewish people in the armed struggle against Nazism and thought about how all this is relevant for Israel. The outcome of the World War II not only allowed the Jewish state to appear on the world map, but also remains a constant reminder of the everyday reality. Almost all students (male and female) have served in the IDF; twice a year they are called up for military trainings. My doctoral student as well as secretary of the Diaspora Research Centre, the son of Professor Simha Goldin, took part in the "Enduring Rock" military operation in Gaza (July – August 2014). All Israeli universities permit entry with personal weapons to their territories, provided that the owner has special permission to wear it. I know this from my personal experience, as my son (who studies Southeast Asia at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem) came to the exam with a gun in a holster, and no one was bothered. Staying in a hostile environment, the country is forced to defend itself. And how many people with guns are there on the streets of Israel? But no one, except tourists and visitors, is surprised.

The conference ended. The results were summed up and the participants started leaving. I also left the conference room and looked around – life goes on.

NEW BOOKS

A BOOK ON US GAINS AND BELARUS' LOSSES

DAVID MELTSER. JEWS FROM BELARUS IN THE USA. NEW YORK, 2014

LEONID SMILOVITSKY AND ZACHAR ŠYBIEKA



A book "Jews from Belarus in America" by Professor David Meltser can be considered a surprise for the readers who are interested in the national history of Belarus. Zachar Šybieka attended lectures by Professor David Meltser at the Belarusian State University. Could he believe that in the process of 40 years the research interests of a former student and the distinguished professors would coincide? Today Zachar Šybieka is a professor himself. He is working on a monograph on the history of the Jews in Minsk in 1793-1917. And the recent book of his teacher contains lots of interesting information about the natives of this city who emigrated to the United States.

Dr. Leonid Smilovitsky knows David Meltser well; in the past 20 years he has maintained close creative cooperation with this respected professor.

We do truly believe that the book will excite a lively interest. It depicts the impressive achievements of US immigrants from Belarus, their children and grandchildren who remember their homeland.

The book opens with two review articles "Jews on the Belarusian lands" and "Emigration waves of Belarusian Jews." It is followed by 52 biographical essays dedicated to the most famous immigrants from Belarus. The last section is devoted to the life and work of Professor Meltser and written by his long-term assistant and friend Genrikh Rutman.

David Meltser graduated from the History Department of the Belarusian State University; since 1949 he was a lecturer of modern and contemporary history of western countries, since – assistant professor with research focus on the history of southern and western Slavs. He is the author of more than 260 scientific works, including ten books on IR history and history of Bulgaria. Professor Meltser is one of the few historians of Jewish ethnicity in the postwar Soviet Belarus who managed to defend a doctoral thesis and who earned the title of full professor in 1976.

David Meltser's emigration to the United States in August 1992 can be considered his second birth as a scientist. Only there was he able to speak openly, to study and to write what he had long been interested in – the history and the culture of his own people. In 1996, Professor Meltser together with Vladimir Levin published "The Black Book with Red Pages: Tragedy and Heroism of Belarusian Jews, 1941-1944". In 2005 it was published in English by VIA Press (Cockeysville, MD). In 2006 a new book "Yellow Stars in Belarus" by David Meltser appeared. From 1993 to 2010 professor Meltser was a political analyst at the RTN channel and a vice-president of the Belarusian section of the United Association of East--European Jews.

The new book "Belarusian Jews in America" had been prepared by Professor Meltzer bit by bit for many years. As a result, he managed to tell the stories of 137 famous American Jews who have Belarusian roots. Among them there are renowned scientists, journalists, artists, politicians, religious authorities, mayors, successful businessmen. It is enough to mention at least some of them to be convinced what human capital was acquired by the USA and what was the loss of Belarus:

Michael Bernard Mukasey – U.S. Attorney General in the Cabinet of President George W. Bush (2007-2009); Michael Bloomberg – one of the richest persons in the United States who served as Mayor of New York (2002-2013); Wesley Kanne Clark – U.S. Army general, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (1997-2000); Steven Ballmer, former chief executive officer of Microsoft; Steven Spielberg – a world-known film director and producer, author of the Oscar-winning historical drama Schindler's List (1993); Scarlett Johansson – a famous American actress; Yuri Foreman – professional boxer and former WBA champion, and many other prominent figures.

The reviewed book is not only interesting to readers, but also to bibliographers. In addition to the descriptions of the

fates of the famous immigrants from Belarus, their scientific works, artistic works and memoirs are cited. These works are little known in Belarus.

However, the book by Meltser is not a handbook on American emigrants. The author paints a vivid image, shows how American realities transformed people who escaped from Great-Russian and later Soviet despotism. Enviable perseverance and hard work have allowed many Jewish immigrants to successfully embody their talents and skills.

Natives of Belarus remembered their Belarusian past oversees. At the end of the 19thcentury- and first half of the 20th century Jewish literature in Yiddish enjoyed its heyday in the United States. A Bialystok-born (Belarusian: *Bielastok*, Russian: *Belostok*) Max Weber (1881-1961) was the author of the paintings such as "Sabbath" or "The Talmudists" (pp.145-147). Leon Kobrin (1872-1946), born in Viciebsk (Russian: Vitebsk) wrote a story Yankel Boila about the tragic love of a Jewish boy and a Belarusian girl. After the publication of this story he became famous (p.117). Zalman Shneur (1887-1959) devoted a novel "Škloŭ (Russian: *Shklov*) Jews" and an essay "Škloŭ children" to his contrymen (p.125) A famous actor and film director, who played the lead in Spartacus directed by Stanley Kubrick, Kirk Douglas, had lithograph by Marc Chagall hung over the bed and, as he himself admitted, he remembered that his parents were from Belarus: father from Čavusy (Russian: *Chausy*) and mother from Homieĺ (Russian: *Gomel*) (pp. 195,197). It is significant that some modern educated Americans already distinguish Belarusian Jews and do not call them Russian, as it was before.

David Meltser consistently remains on the platform of Belarusian national historiography. He rejects the notion of "Russian Jews (*russkie evrei*)" and even the title of the book declares the study of "Belarusian Jews", while the text uses the more accurate notion "Jews from Russian state (*rossiyskie evrei*)" (p.105). For him, the name of the homeland is Belarus, not Belorussia, as numerous Soviet Russian and pro--Russian historians continue to call it. Teodor Narbutt (1784-1864), in fact, can be considered not only a Lithuanian, but also a Belarusian historian, as does the author (p.8).

A book "Jews from Belarus in the USA" by Professor Meltser in its own way complements the popular work of Professor Emmanuil Ioffe "Belarusian Jews in Israel" (Minsk, 2000) and provides a broad view of the Jewish exodus from the Belarusian lands and its causes.

David Meltser shows a Jewish face of the Belarusian emigration to the United States. This book should be read both in the USA and in Belarus. It, like a book "Belarusians in the USA" (Minsk, 1993) by Dr Vitaŭt Kipiel, will contribute to the rapprochment and mutual understanding between two countries and peoples. If Kipiel wrote about ethnic Belarusians, Meltser focused on Belarusian Jews. Both these groups justly regarded Belarus as their homeland. Proof of this are dozens of local associations created in the U.S. by Jews from different parts of Belarus. Some of them still exist; others transferred their archives to the Yiddish Scientific Institute (*YIVO – Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut*). The reader obtains an impressive picture of the Belarusian presence in the U.S. over the past hundred years and its significant contribution to the establishment of a phenomenon known as ‚the American miracle'.

It seems logical to publish a book by Professor Meltser in Belarus. Thus, we make a number of comments which must be taken into account at its possible re-release.

First of all, the status of some settlements should be clarified. Here are a few examples. The Gomel province did not exist in 1893 (p. 119). It was created in 1919 after the proclamation of the BSSR. Baranovichi district did not exist (p. 226), a settlement Vidzy near Vitebsk is not mentioned among the towns of Vitebsk province (p.83). Perhaps it was Vidzy located in Novoaleksandrovsk uezd (county), Kovno province? During the Tsarist rule Igumen of Minsk province (now Červień, Minsk region) was a county town, not a borough (p. 140). Since 1861 the same status enjoyed Gorki of Mohilev province (p. 153). Pinsk and Telekhany were located in Minsk and not in Grodno province (pp. 276, 354). Kleshcheli, not Kleshchel (now Kleszczele, Podlaskie Voivodeship, Poland) were a downgraded town, not a borough (p. 123).

There are also some unfortunate misprints. The surname of an artist from Minsk was Kruger, not Kreger (p. 172) Annihilation of Jews from the Minsk ghetto took place on 21-23 October 1943, and not on 21 December. Chaïm Soutine was present in the United States only by his paintings; so is it worth to include him into the list of American immigrants? On p. 141, year 1861 is indicated instead of 1961. The book is a popular science piece, it is easy to read and understand. It does not claim a scientific status. The author addresses his work to a wide range of Russian-speaking readers and believes that in this case references to the sources are not so important. Perhaps for this reason, the book does not have a general list of references, alphabetical and geographical indicators, as well as other attributes of academic publications.

However, these shortcomings do not detract from the value of the book by Professor Meltser. Without a doubt, the author achieved his goal. His book provides insight into the relationship of human lives and achievements. He gradually leads the reader to think how the place of residence affects the achievements of a creative individual. Why have the Jews from Belarus reached the top in the USA applying their talents in various areas of life? What would happen if the tragic events at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the anti-Semitic pogroms, revolution and civil war did not push tens of thousands of Jews from Belarus?

In conclusion, we can only congratulate the author on the successful completion of a large and important work that will be highly appreciated by grateful readers.

AGAIN ABOUT SKARYNA IN PADUA: CIRCUMSTANCES

VOLHA SHUTAVA

"PAUPER": A POOR OR A KNIGHT TEMPLAR ALIAS EXPENSES AND SALARIES

In 2002 a new book by Uladzimir Ahijevič *Skaryna's Name and Deeds* (in Belarusian: *Imia i sprava Skaryny*) about Skaryna was published in Minsk. The author offers his own interpretation of the word pauper from the first Skaryna's Paduan document in which he requested grace (*gratia*). Ahijevič argues that pauper is not a 'poor' but is a reference to Skaryna's affiliation with the Knights Templar – *Pauperes Commilitones Christi Templique Solomonici*. Despite the rather devastating critique of the entire monograph by scholars, the doubts about the translation of pauper are getting new followers. That is why it is important to discuss this aspect in details.

The Order of the Temple was founded in 1129 and existed until the 14th century. Its activities, mystical philosophy and mythical wealth gave rise to many rumors. Nevertheless, the Order was abolished in 1307-1314 and disbanded by papal bulls in 1312. Individual organizations of the Order continued to exist in England, Portugal, but not in its 'headquarters' in France, where they were ruthlessly destroyed. According to the bull of Pope Clement V the property of the Order of the Temple was transferred to the Order of Hospitallers, also known as Knights of Malta, which has survived to the present time (Demurger 2010). However, there is no evidence which could confirm Skaryna's affiliation with the Hospitallers, who in fact cannot be called *paupers*.

Therefore, despite somewhat too 'romantic' attempts of some scholars to link Skaryna with the Knights Templar and especially with Freemasons (who appeared only in the beginning of the 17th century in England and at the earliest – in the end of the 16th century in Scotland), the translation of the word *pauper* in the records of the University of Padua is banal and clear: 'poor'! The authorities of the University of Padua, one of the leading European universities, were authorized by a special papal charter to award doctoral degrees on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, they could not declare openly in an official document a candidate's affiliation with the Order which had been banned several centuries before, even if there was a secret Order of the Temple in any European country.

There are other facts that testify in favor of the correctness of the classic translation *pauper* as 'poor'. Although Skaryna's files from Padua contain no other reference to his poverty, there are other documents in the *Acta Gradua* which contain similar formulations. For example, the act records No. 727-728 comprise almost the same wording as that of Skaryna's: the defense of Ioannis Francisci de Clavenega in surgery was sanctioned free of charge, *cum ipse sit pauper* (Forin 1969, 261-2). Moreover, in some acts very clearly specified conditions for exception or facilitation of the payment amount are listed. Documents No. 860 and No. 863 *Acta Graduum* can serve as the examples. We refer to the document No. 860 in which candidate Ubertinus Pedemontanus requests grace of the Sacred Board and defines himself as pauper:

> *1521 maii 29. Padue en eccl. S. Urbani hora XII....*
>
> *Gratie d. Ubertini Pedemontani.*
>
> *Demum – d. prior posuit hoc partitum: - "est quidam pauper scholaris art. et med. – qui vellet habere – ambos convenctus – unum gratis et amore Dei – et alterum cum ducatis viginti et cyrotecis; - nominatur Ubertinus Pedemontanus"; Dactis – balotis, obtentum fuit omnibus suffragiis, uno excepto.….interfuerunt...*
>
> *Tenor ipsius taxe pro convenctu ducatis XX et cyrothecis.* (Forin 1969, 338—9).

This request can be translated as follows:

> A grace request for Ubertinus Pedemontanus
>
> Finally, the Prior has identified the following part of the meeting: "there is a scholar in arts and medicine in front of us who is poor and who would like to pass both the exams (VS: i.e. in arts and medicine), one – free of charge, another one – for 20 ducats and donated gloves. His name is Ubertinus Pedemontanus". Ballots were distributed, the majority of votes was received with the exception of one vote.

As document No. 863 testifies, Pedemontanus successfully stood the exams in arts and in medicine and received doctoral degrees in these fields:

> *'fuit tentatus in art. et med. et – fuit – iudicatus suffitiens ad subeundum suum privatum tam in art. quam in med. (nam. in art. habuit balotas pro*** contra vero octo, in med. – omnes balotas – nem. contradicente)...'*

i.e.

> He was subjected to a trial exam (tentativum) [for a doctoral degree] in arts and medicine and demonstrated sufficient knowledge to pass privatum, both in arts and in medicine (for arts: *** [unknown number of] ballots for and eight ballots against; for medicine: no votes against)… (Forin 1969, 339).

The amount of expenses to obtain doctoral degree can be found in the same document No. 860 in which Ubertinus Pedemontanus asks to pass two exams and to pay only for one of them, as he possessed only 20 ducats and gloves. Pedemontanus's expenses were distributed as follows:

- bishop – 12 lire and 8 soldi

- vicar – 3 lire and 10 soldi
- for the privilege – 6 lire and 4 soldi
- for equipment and bells – 3 lire
- examiners – 2 lire
- twelve book-keepers 4 lire and 6 soldi each, i.e. 51 lire and 12 soldi in total
- four assistants of book-keepers – 8 lire and 12 soldi
- prior – 4 lire and 6 soldi
- *promotores* (advisers) – 12 lire and 20 soldi
- rector – 8 lire and 6 soldi
- university – 2 lire and 14 soldi
- university notary – 1 lira
- Board notary – 6 lire and 14 soldi
- three clerk assistants – 1 lira and 16 soldi
- three young people (witnesses) – 12 lire and 8 soldi
- church clerks – 2 lire and 14 soldi
- totally for the convocation – 140 lire and 14 soldi
- additionally, three Board assistants – 1 lira and 16 soldi

In total: 142 lire and 20 soldi.

It should be reminded that 1 ducat was 6 lire and 4 soldi (or 124 soldi) and 1 lira was 20 soldi. Thus, Pedemontanus paid for one exam 143 lire, or 2860 soldi, or 23 ducats.

A comparison with various testimonies of that era seems relevant for a more "tangible" assessment of the doctoral degree costs. For instance, an unskilled worker at the shipyard in Venice received 8 to 10 soldi a day which is about 16-20 ducats a year. A skilled worker, for example a carpenter or a mason, received about 30 soldi a day which is 60 ducats a year (Chojnacka 2001, 6).

A comparison of approximate costs of basic foods in the Republic of Venice (which at that time included Padua) in the early 16th century completes this picture. A typical family of four persons (two of whom are children) spent about 20 ducats a year for bread, 2 ducats for meat and 4-6 ducats for sweets, wine and contingencies. The average cost of property rent in the Republic of Venice was 5-6 ducats and rental housing comprised at least 94% of all housing stock in this period (Chojnacka 2001, 7). As a result, we get the amount of 30-35 ducats a year to which the cost of heating and lighting should be added. As a result, a person with a salary of 60 ducats a year did not have much funds left "for luxury", not to mention unskilled workers (Chojnacka 2001, 146).

Also, one should consider that the prices in Padua were higher and the living standards – lower than in Venice. Hence, "[p]oorer than any other in the Venetian state, Padua was a town that begged, a Venetian governor reported in 1549" (Grendler 2002, 38). Most of the Paduan population huddled in homes that they rented for 14 ducats per year (Grendler 2002, 38), the sum which comprises more than half of the amount which Pedemontanus paid just for one doctoral examination!

Such "materialization" allows a reader to better imagine the level of expenditures of the candidates for a doctoral degree. On the other hand, it creates a picture of the Skaryna's financial situation. For him the exemption from exam payment was a necessity, as he presented himself as 'poor' in front of the Sacred Board.

SECRETARII REGIS DATIAE: DENMARK OR ROMANIA?

Already in 1960 Jan Sadoŭski discovered the document stored in the Episcopal Curia in Padua episcopal curia. It significantly complemented the defenses records from the University of Padua Archive (Sadoŭski 1969, 25-8). The publication *Acta Graduum Academicorum ab anno 1501 – ad annum 1525* (Forin 1969) lists this record as No. 651; in it Skaryna is called *secretarii Regis Datiae*. The text of this document was taken by Elda Forin from the *Archivio della Curia Vescovile di Padova*. It almost entirely corresponds to the text and translation by Sadoŭski. While providing here some additional arguments, we would like to add the voice to the views of those famous specialists on Skaryna, such as Sadoŭski, Florovskij, Halienčanka (1998, 13), Braha (1964, 19-21), who argue that for some time after graduation from the Cracow University Skaryna had worked as a royal secretary in Denmark.

In fact, the question in which part of Europe (i.e. Romanian Dacia or Denmark) Skaryna worked as a royal secretary is quite complex. Typically, researchers dismiss 'the Romanian track' because the 'Romanian' Dacia, a former Roman province, no longer existed in the Renaissance. It had disappeared so long ago that the medieval and Renaissance coevals had enough time to forget the Dacian Kingdom (1st century BC – 2nd century AD) and the Roman Dacia (106 – 271 AD).

The argument is clear. However, the delicacy of the situation is based on difficult circumstances and sinuosity of historical memory. The ancient heritage which seemed lost in the barbarian conquests was still fairly well felt in the Middle Ages. For example, the list of the Roman provinces dated around 314 and known as the so-called *Laterculus Veronensis* or Verona List consists of approximately one hundred Roman provinces organized to 12 regions (or dioceses). The diocese of Moesia (Moesiae) consisted of 11 provinces: *Dacia [Mediterranea], [Dacia Ripensis], Moesia Superior/Margensis, Dardania, Macedonia, Thessalia, [Achaea], Praevalitana, Epirus Nova, Epirus Vetus, Creta* (Barnes 1982, 201—8).

In turn, the document that was created during the time of Charlemagne refers to the Catholic provinces of Europe, Asia and Africa, and evidently correlates with the *Laterculus Veronensis*:

> *In Illirico sunt provincie numero XIX. Dalmatia supra mare. Pannonia I, in qua est Firmium. Pannonia II. Valeria. Prevales. Missia superior. Epirus ventus. Epirus nomina. Pampica Noricus Ripevus supra Danubium. Noricus mediterranea. Favia. Dardania. Hermodontus. Datia. Scythia. Creta insula. Achaia. Macedonia. Thessa-*

lia (Carolus Magnus 1851, 460).

Thus, the Roman Catholic Church has taken 'traditional' geographical names of the Roman Empire and transferred them to its own provinces and dioceses. Antoine-Augustin Bruzen, geographer His royal Catholic Majesty Philip V of Spain, provided a definition of the term 'province'. In particular he discusses 'church provinces' and 'dioceses' and lists them. His work was guided by all the same document of 700 years ago. Among the Illyrian regions he mentioned the province of Dacia, though together with such archaisms as *Achaia, Scythia, Epirus, Thracia*, etc. (Bruzen de La Martinière 1736, 186).

At the same time, it would be a mistake to claim that the name Dacia applied only to the ecclesiastical provinces. Christian writers of the early Middle Ages adapted changes that occurred in the new Europe by placing them on the old matrix of the ancient world. A profound example of this adaptation is the so-called *Ravenna Cosmography* (compiled by an anonymous cleric about 700, in the version dated by 1119)[1]. As current researches demonstrate, it is based on a map similar to Peutinger table (*Tabula Peutingeriana*), a map that depicted the road network of the Roman Empire, in 1st century BC - 5th century AD). The Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna emphatically refers to the works of Ptolemy, Orosius, Jordanes, Isidore of Seville. He also mentions the 'Gothic philosophers' Athanarit, Hildebald and Markomir.

Our attention was particularly drawn to passages of the 'Cosmography' in which northern Denmark is separated from two Dacias (*Datia minor* and *Datia magna* formerly inhabited by Gepids) through the Alps and the region in ancient times controlled by Maurungani and then for many years by the Franks. Moreover, Denmark and two Dacias are both located in the 'four o'clock in the morning'.[2]

In the following paragraph twelve, we find: "At eight o'clock in the morning there is a land of *Roxolani*. Beyond it, far in the ocean, there is a large island – the ancient Scythia... A wise cosmographer Jordanes called it *Scanza*. This island is a homeland of Goths, Danes and Gepids."[3]

There is another addlement, as the Anonymous of Ravenna confuses Scandinavia (*Scanza*) and Scythia. Thus, it turns out that Denmark and Dacia are not just neighbors, but actually affined! Furthermore, they are located in the same 'four in the morning.'

Thus, the Ravenna Cosmography lists as neighbors those European regions which do not border on each other. Why did it happen? The fact is that the Anonymous of Ravenna tried to follow the path of Ptolemy and apply map of the world to the coordinate grid. The division of the day into hours was chosen as the main measurement, and the city of Ravenna was chosen as the center of the map. The world map was divided into 12 daily hours and 12 hours of night. As a result, both Denmark and Dacia were attributed to the 'four o'clock in the morning'... Moreover, like many other historians, the Anonymous of Ravenna believed that Scandinavia was actually an island; and this island was a homeland for the inhabitants of both Denmark and Dacia (Podosinov 1999, 227—36).

Further, in Book IV of the Ravenna Cosmography Denmark (*Dania*) and Dacia (*Datia*) can be found, again as the closest neighbors (paragraph 13 followed by paragraph 14):

> • Again, next to these *Scerdefennos* (Finns – V.S.) of the ocean coast there is a country called Denmark. This country, according to the aforementioned Gothic philosophers Athanarit, Hildebald and Markomir, is the home of the fastest people of all nations... This Denmark has been recently called the country of *Nordomanorum* ('northern peoples' – V.S.)[4]
>
> • Further southwards there is a spacious area called Dacia, the first and the second one, also known as *Gipidia* which is now inhabited by Huns and Avars. Two Dacias were described by many philosophers, of whom I read Gothic philosophers Menelac and Aristarchus. However, I have designated these countries according to Sardatius.[5]

It is not surprising that coevals and descendants confused and identified Dacia (which moreover did not exist as a state formation) with Denmark, which was a kingdom. A French abbot Jacques-Paul Migne, who in 1851 published a list of the Catholic provinces of Charlemagne (which we have already quoted here). As for the list of Catholic provinces of the Kingdom of Denmark ('*In Regno Danie*'), he thought it necessary to add an explanatory note: 'In Datia' (Carolus Magnus 1851, 469)!

The plot with transformations between Dacia and Denmark gets an unexpected turn in studies of the Danish historian J.G. Jakobsen. It is him who distinguishes the landmark when from a simple 'neighborhood' Dacia literally 'moved' to the geographic place of Denmark.

Jakobsen emphasizes that the descriptions by Paulus Orosius (around 400 AD) who put *Dacia* next to *Gothia* between *Alania* and *Germania* were later repeated by Isidore of Seville (around 600 AD) and became widely known in the Middle Ages. They linked Dacia with Gothia. The natives of Scandinavia, Goths moved southwards to Dacia during the Migration Period (4th - 8th centuries).

Thus, known as being located "somewhere next to the Goths", no longer existed as a state Dacia was moved by the medieval authors to *Götaland* and *Gotland* in Sweden. At the end of the 12th century this misunderstanding took ground: from 1192 the papal administration started applying the term Dacia in relation to Denmark. This term became standard with regard to the Kingdom of Denmark (*regio Dacia*) and even to the whole ecclesiastical province in Scandinavia (*provincia Dacia*). Thus, in 1226-28 while forming a province consisted of three Scandinavian kingdoms the Dominican Order called it Dacia. The same was made by the Franciscans in 1239. Moreover, in the late Middle Ages the notion 'Dacia' was often used with regard to the whole Scandinavia, inclu-

ding Schleswig, Estonia, Sweden, Finland, Karelia, Norway. Even the papal inquisitors in the 15th century were appointed for the whole area called *Dacia* (Jakobsen 2012).

This conviction went far beyond the church administration. Jakobsen stresses that at the period in question Danish and Scandinavian scholars and students at foreign universities were consolidated under the criterion *de Dacia* ('from Dacia' – V.S.). Moreover, even within Scandinavia this term gained popularity (*Dania que nunc Dacia* / 'Denmark which is called Dacia') (Jakobsen 2012).

Thus a treaty between the Union of Kalmar and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of June 1419 concluded in Copenhagen (*in castro Haffnensi*) first refers to the king Eric as *rex Daniae, Sueciae et Norvegiae universes* while in the next line provides specification: *Nos Ericus, Dei gracia regnorum Dacie, Swecie, Norwegie, Gottorum Slaworumque rex et dux Pomeranii etc.* (Nowak 1996, 102).

DACIA'S TWISTS AND TURNS IN MAP-MAKING

Quite tangled already in the early Middle Ages, the geographical puzzle called *Dacia* became even more complicated in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance era, when European intellectuals were rediscovering Ptolemy. Lost for centuries (its translation into Arabic has been known in the Islamic world since the 12th century), Ptolemy's *Geographia* returns to Europe in the Greek language, and at the beginning of the 15th century it was translated from Greek into Latin by a Byzantine scholar a Byzantine scholar Emmanuel Chrysolaras and his student Jacopo d'Angelo, 1406-1409). This work with its rules of cartography, principles of latitude and longitude and the maps which came with it fell on fertile ground and becoming real 'discovery' for Western European Renaissance thinkers, whose thirst for new knowledge and reassessment of the ancient heritage demanded foundations of geography.

The impact of Ptolemy's map-making was so strong that almost all the atlases printed from 1477 to 1570 were in fact based on the text and maps of Ptolemy (Bagrow 1985, 59-94). Since Ptolemy reflected the realities of the epoch he lived in (2nd century AD, the time of the Roman provinces and Dacia was one of them),the maps printed in the 15th-16th centuries still featured Dacia north of the Balkans, exactly where there was this Roman province was once located. Nevertheless, already in the 15th century many cartographers realized that the maps of Ptolemy had flaws, inaccuracies and limitations. For example, America, Japan or South Africa do not appear to them. As a result, cartographers and publishers of Ptolemy's *Geographia* and related maps (Bologna - 1477, Rome - 1478, Ulm – 1482) make their corrections and additions, or even draw new segments of its maps.

Among these 'modernized' maps of Ptolemy, one can mention *Tabulae modernae* (Ulm, 1482 and 1486)[6]. It contains the first printed map of Scandinavia in which to the north of *Germanie pars* there is a territory of today's Denmark marked as *Dacia*. Moreover, further northwards in the direction of *Gottia Oxidentali*s one can find *Scania et Dacia* (Holle 1482, 80). However the adventure of Dacia does not end here. While upgrading and expanding Ptolemy's maps, Claudius Clavus, Nicholaus Germanus, and publisher of Ptolemy's *Geographia* in Ulm Lienhart Holl still adhere to the Ptolemy's tradition to draw another Dacia on the site of the former Roman province, north of *Misia Superior* and *Misia Inferior* (Holle 1482, 98). Thus, one edition of *Geographia* contains two (and if one counts *Scania et Dacia* – even three) Dacias: 'Romanian' Dacia and 'Scandinavian' Dacia.

For almost a century, a similar coexistence of two Dacias can be found on many other published maps. This situation is quite natural, as the image of 'the new world' was being created gradually. Thus, although the maps were modernized, the adherence to the tradition, Ptolemy's authority and general respect towards the antiquity made cartographers reproduce the 'old' Roman Dacia along with the 'new' Scandinavian Dacia (McLean 1997, 45).

As a result, both in 15th and in 16th nearly all printed maps contain two Dacias. For example, a famous Sebastian Münster who published Ptolemy's *Geographia* (1540 and 1542) included two Dacias. The first one was located to the north from Greece.



Map 1: Tabula Europae IX. Geographiae Claudii Ptolemaei ... libri VIII (Münster 1552)

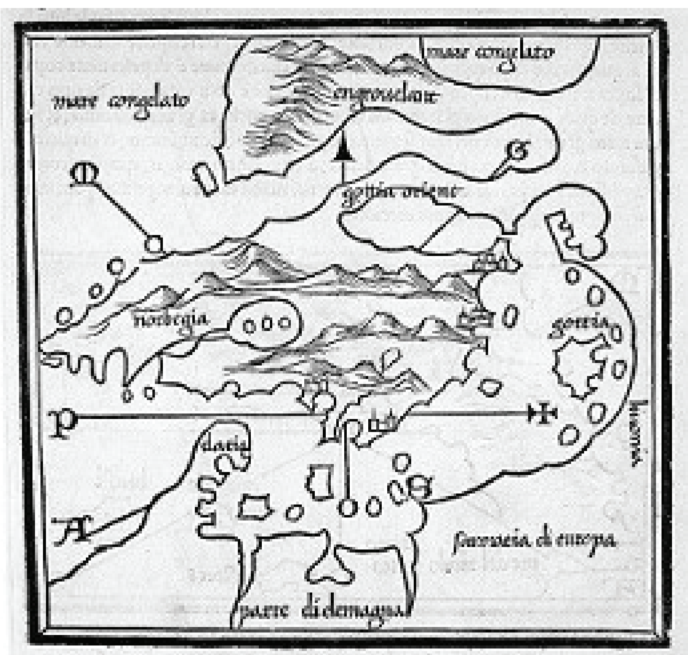
The second Dacia was situated to the north of Germania Magna, next to Scandia Major.

Formally, we can acknowledge the presence of two Dacias on the maps of the Skaryna's epoch. However, if the ‚Roman' Dacia was a simple tribute to the outdated traditions and, most likely, reproduced only by inertia, the ‚Scandinavian' Dacia was one of those novelties that cartographers tried to introduce in order bring ancient knowledge into conformity with modern developments. Like all archaisms which are gradually removed, both Dacias started disappearing from the maps (see: Ortelius 1571 and maps published after him),



Map 2: Tabula Europae IIII. Geographiae Claudii Ptolemaei ... libri VIII (Münster 1552)

as the Latin names were gradually replaced with self-designations of the states.



Map 3. Benedetto Bordone, Isolario… Libro Primo, VI

However, the strongest support ‚the Danish version' of' Skaryna's Dacia can be found in Padua itself, or, more precisely, in Venice. There, in 1528 a Paduan cartographer and miniaturist Benedetto Bordone (1460-1531, many researchers claim that he was grandfather of Joseph Justus Scaliger, founder of the science of historical chronology)[7] printed his famous work "The Book of Islands" (*Isolario*). In it we see Dacia next to Norway, just where is today's Denmark is located.

It is particularly important that this work reflects the views and ideas of Venetians and Paduans of the Skaryna-'s epoch. It was dedicated to Bordone's nephew, Balthazar, a military surgeon who traveled a lot. Despite the fact that the maps produced in the *Isolario* were quite schematic and lacking scaling and coordinates, they were addressed primarily to an ‚armchair traveler' and enjoyed great success, being reprinted three times (Lestringant 2002, 20).

NOTES:

[1] First published in Itineraria Romana, Joseph Schnetz (ed.), 1940. Vol 2: Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Guidonis Geographia, Leipzig,: Teubner. Volume 2 contains The Cosmography of the Unknown Ravennese and the version of Guido of Pisa from 1119.

[2] Original: Quarta ut hora noctis Northomanorum est patria, que et Dania ab antiquis dicitur. Cuius ad frontem Alpes vel patria Albis: Maurungani certissime antiquitus dicebatur. In qua Albis patria per multos annos Francorum linea remorata est. Et ad frontum eiusdem Albis Datia minor dicitur, et dehinc super ex latere magna et spatiosa Datia dicitur: quae modo Gipidia ascribuntur; In qua nunc Unorum gens habitare dinoscitur. Posthinc Illiricus usque ad provinciam Dalmatie pertinget. See: Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Gvidonis Geographica. 1860. Ex libris manu scriptis, in Pinder, Moritz and Parthey, Gustav (eds). Berolini (Berlin): In Aedibus Friderici Nicolai, Book IV. 11, pp. 27—8.

[3] Original: Octava ut hora noctis Roxolanorum est patria. Cuius post terga oceanum procul magna insula Antiqua Scithia reperitur. Quam insulam plerique philosophi.. Historiographi conlaudant; quam et Iordanus, sapientissimus cosmographus, Scanzan appelait. Ex qua insula... pariterque gentes occidentales egresse sunt; nam Gotthos et Danos, una simul Gepidas ex ea antiquitus exisse legitimus. See: Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Gvidonis Geographica. 1860. Ex libris manu scriptis, in Pinder, Moritz and Parthey, Gustav (eds). Berolini (Berlin): In Aedibus Friderici Nicolai, Book IV. 11, p. 29.

[4] Original: Iterum iuxta ipsos Scerdefennos litus Oceani est patria quae dicitur Dania. Quae patria ut ait supra scriptus Aitanaridus et Eldevaldus et Marcomirus Gothorum philosophi super omnes nationes velocissimos proferre homines. Que Dania modo Nordomanorum dicitur patria. Per quam Daniam plurima transeunt flumina, inter cetera que dicitur Lina, quae in Oceano ingreditur. See: Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Gvidonis Geographica. 1860. Ex libris manu scriptis, in Pinder, Moritz and Parthey, Gustav (eds). Berolini (Berlin): In Aedibus Friderici Nicolai, Book IV. 13, 201—202.

[5] Original: Iterum ad partem quasi meridianam, ut dicamus ad spatiosissime quae dicuntur Datia prima et secunda, quae et Gipidia appelatur, ubi modo Uni qui et Avari inhabitant. Quas utrasque Datias plurimi descripserunt philosophi, ex quibus ego legi Menelac et Aristarchum Gothorum phylosophos; sed ego secundum Sardatium ipsas patrias designavi. In quas Dacorum patrias antiquitus plurimas fuisse civitates legitimus, ex quibus aliquantas designare volumus, id est Drubetis, Pretorich, Gazanam, Tibis… See: Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Gvidonis Geographica. 1860. Ex

libris manu scriptis, in Pinder, Moritz and Parthey, Gustav (eds). Berolini (Berlin): In Aedibus Friderici Nicolai, Book IV, 14, .202—203.

[6] The map was created in 1468 by Nicolaus Germanus, it was based on the map of Scandinavia by Claudius Clavus (1427).

[7] Some researchers criticized this opinion arguing that Scaliger's grandfather was a certain Benedetto Bordone di Verone (Renouard Antoine-Augustin, Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde, ou Histoire des trois Manuce et de leurs éditions. Paris: J.Renouard, 1834, p.142).

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BELARUSIAN REVIEW WORKING PAPERS

In October 2014 Belarusian Review and The_Point Journal have launched a series of BR Working Papers focused on various areas of Belarusian studies within a wider regional perspective: political and economic situation, foreign and domestic policies, culture and history, identity issues and interethnic relations.

As of now, three BR Working Papers have been published:

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- Kascian, Kiryl. ‚Belarus-EU Relations: Ad Hoc Actions vs. Pre-developed Strategy', Belarusian Review Working Paper #2 (November 2014).
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